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Hair apparent

If Mrs Thatcher goes, There Is No Alternative to... the man who can play the ultimate presidential card! R W Johnson measures the width of Heseltine's appeal, Rob Shepherd looks at the quality

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The right in Germany; women making out, Kathy Acker, Agnes Heller, Hugh Masekela

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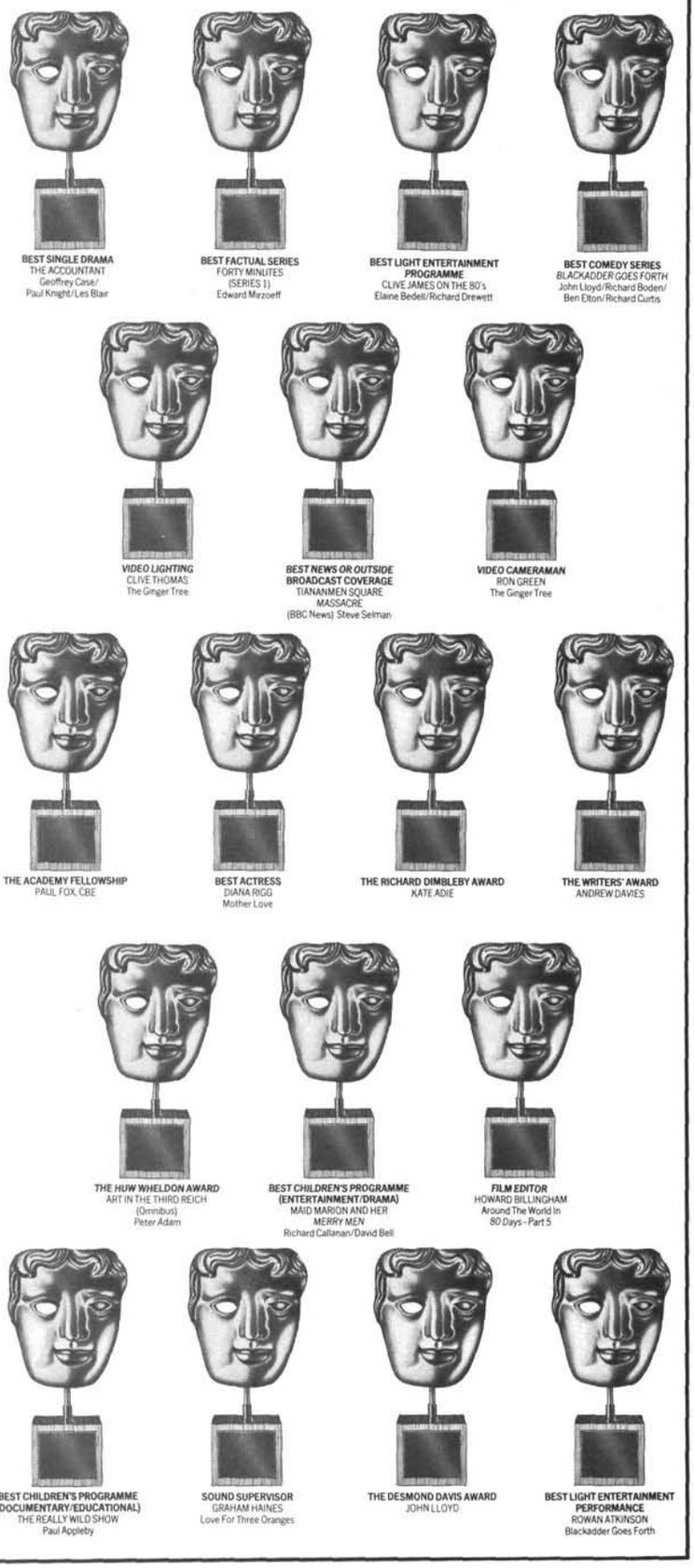

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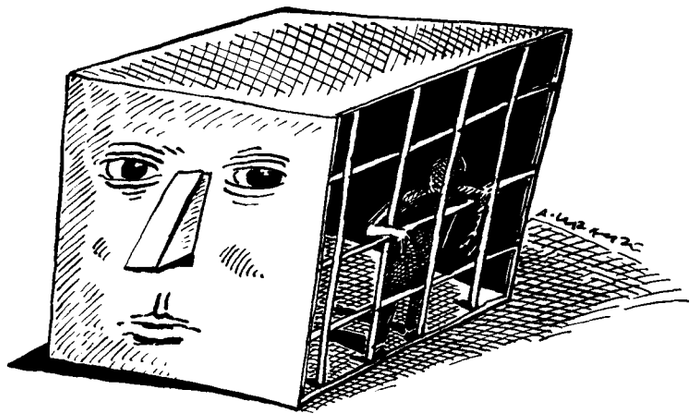

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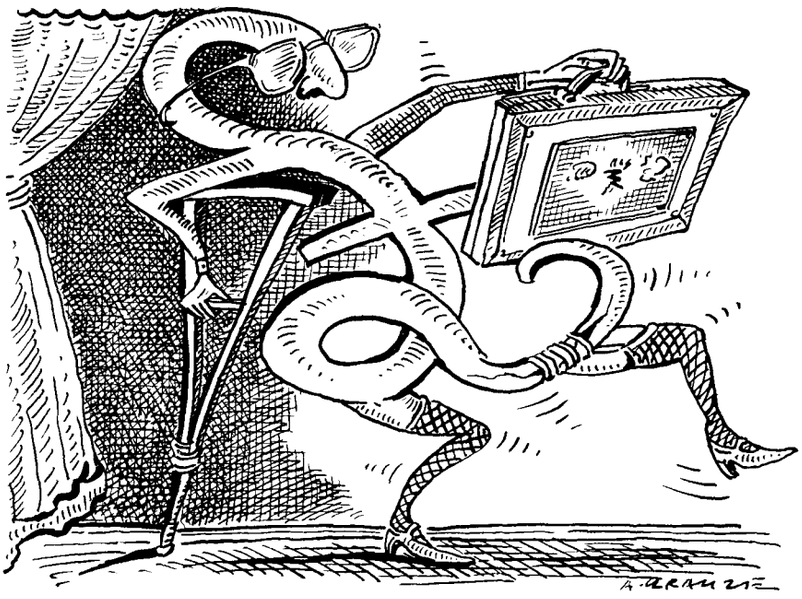
A saviour's budget?

The economic policies of Mrs Thatcher's regime have reduced politics to the art of the implausible



Andrzej Krauze

Once upon a time, politics in Britain was all about economics. Today, economics is all about politics. Never before has discussion of a budget, before, during and after, been so much concerned with the electoral consequences and so little with the actual measures proposed, as this week. We've had comment on the budget's implications for the Mid-Staffordshire by-election, for the morale of Tory backbenchers, for the party's position in the polls, for the timing and result of the next general election, for Mrs Thatcher's chances of survival, even (though absurdly) on what it will do for John Major's own leadership prospects. But almost nothing of substance on what Major said or what it might mean for the economy. Even the specialist economic writers of the national dailies all turned into political columnists for the moment.

The blanket has not descended just because Major announced so very little that really mattered. We've had do-nothing budgets before, but at least they were debated on their meagre merits, as this budget has not been. Nor is it explained by the possibly more significant fact that this was the first televised budget speech. It has far more to do with the fact that no real alternatives, no clash of ideas, now seem possible in economic policy. Major himself had almost no room for manoeuvre, thanks to the disastrous legacy of Lawson's tax and interest policies and Thatcher's phobias about inflation and the EMS.

Who would ever have expected, in the monetarist 1980s, to hear a Conservative Chancellor announce quite cheerfully that he did not intend even to set targets for the broad money supply? It isn't just monetarism, long dead, which is finally buried, but even the drastically reduced ambitions for monetary control which Lawson espoused.

Meanwhile Labour's Treasury team, with no real strategy of their own and sharing more of Major's assumptions than they'd ever dare admit, criticise only details and implementation. Have we heard a single frontbench Labour comment on the budget which couldn't have been made, with rather greater force, by Francis Pym or Ian Gilmour? Their responses were almost as anodyne, their lack of vision almost as naked, as Major's own.

But the relentless politicisation of budget debate —politicisation in the narrow sense of calculating personal and party advantage, not the wider sense in which all economic questions are intrinsically political—owes even more to the sea-change in attitudes to the economy which this government has engineered.

Through most of the fifties, sixties and seventies, politicians sought to manipulate political institutions—from ministerial structures to party alignments—in order to get the economy right. Over much of the eighties, the relationship has gone into reverse. Increasingly the strength of the economy is whatever politicians say it is. Success is defined by who can tell the most convincing tales; under Lawson in particular, politics became the art of the implausible. It is not just that economic policy is bent to serve political ends: though it is, and will be ever more so in the coming months. Rather, a partisan rhetoric vaguely alluding to supposed economic facts smothers both. And the press and broadcast media have allowed themselves to be gradually corrupted, too; they judge by appearances, not reality, and accept the shift to naked political opportunism as given.

In this we've come to resemble Reagan's America, where the disastrous realities of industrial decline were wholly obscured for almost all voters by exhortations to feel good about oneself and one's nation. Britain in the 1980s looks like those discredited east European regimes or rulers of banana republics in its disregard for economic realities. "Put politics in command" was originally a Maoist slogan; like much else, it's been appropriated by Mrs Thatcher.

Major's own post-budget TV spot was, purely and simply, a party election broadcast. It was directed not to the nation, still less to the international money markets whose judgment will provide the real acid test of his policy, but at Mid-Staffordshire. The statement itself had much of the same air. Inflexible about policy instruments, the Conservative party is ever more opportunistic in its slogans.

This year's keynote slogan about a "savers' budget" brilliantly demonstrated the now almost infinite malleability of Thatcherite economic rhetoric. It can swallow both the values of the risk-taking entrepreneur *and* those of the saver, for whom risk is anathema. The result oscillates between Micawber and Uriah Heep. But in the present atmosphere it could, shamefully, ridiculously, still see Mrs Thatcher scrape through the next election.

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Aids and comforts

It is a truth universally acknowledged that if you are white, heterosexual and middle class, you are immune from Aids. Or that at least is what a growing lobby in our midst would like us to believe, or perhaps need to believe themselves. The right-wing tabloids have long carried articles denouncing the Department of Health's Aids education work. The *Daily Mail* has denounced it as a "shameful conspiracy of deceit" and accused the government of falling for "militant gay propaganda". But last week the *Sunday Times* ran an extract from Michael Fumento's *The Myth of Heterosexual Aids*—a book which has caused a furore in the US and which major British publishers have refused to publish. In effect, Fumento argues that heterosexual sex is virtually riskless.

Yet this month, *The Lancet* reports that blood samples from babies in three Thames regions indicate that one in 2,000 women in London is HIV positive (ie, has the condition which leads on to full-blown Aids). Aids specialist Michael Adler warns that the proportion of Aids cases acquired heterosexually has risen from two per cent in 1985 to seven per cent in 1989; and the level of HIV infection among heterosexuals attending special clinics in London is now the same as that among gay men only seven years ago.

So why are these agitated folk so desperate to argue that "normal people" don't get Aids? Partly, of course, because it is evidently true that very few heterosexuals do have Aids. But fear and denial are a contagious ingredient in the campaign. In a revealing article in the *Evening Standard*, Myles Harris recently wrote, "They were worlds which nibbled at the corners of our comfortable middle-class existence, made us cling to our monogamous wives and thank God for not being queer or taking heroin. But we whispered under the bed-clothes, 'Can it come to us?'"

The answer, Myles, is yes.

On the hoof?

Not so long ago, Roy Hattersley used to speak of constitutional change as an irrelevant distraction from Labour's real tasks—and worse, something which bores ordinary voters. Last Sunday, he devoted a major interview to the subject on BBC1's *On the Record*. That's already pretty remarkable. But he did more: he said the only serious division lies between those who want change and the Tories (who do not).

Taken at face value, this means a total change of heart. Only weeks ago he was denouncing Charter 88 as wreckers or covert allies of David Owen. Suddenly they (and we?) are ideological soul-mates. There was more. Obviously making up policy on the hoof, on the air and on the record, he pledged himself to proportional representation for Labour's new second chamber. Even more startlingly, he announced that Labour would introduce a Supreme Court for Britain. He went out of his way to emphasise that this was party policy, not a mere personal view.

Not only is this the biggest leap yet in Roy's long, grasshopper progress to constitutional radicalism. It makes untenable his resistance to further change. He called further talk of PR for the Commons "a waste of time". But now that its introduction for the second chamber and a Scottish Assembly is official, and for the European Parliament inevitable, it is blatantly Adullamite to deny it for the popular chamber. More, the sudden but decided conversion to a Supreme Court implies abandonment of all Roy's earlier arguments against a Bill of Rights. Driven all this way by pressures inside and outside his party, he now has a simple choice: to defend the last ditch—a notably shallow and hastily-dug one—or gracefully admit that we were right all along.

Toads v princes

Anyone nostalgic for the bad old days of fratricidal strife in Labour's ranks should have been at Rennes for the French Socialist Party's Congress. In a sort of hardened missile silo masquerading as a conference hall, the comrades not only failed to gain lift-off for an agreed political prospectus (for the first time since 1971) or a carve-up of party posts, they blasted any pretence of party unity to smithereens.

The party's two principal rivals for the Mitterrand succession are Prime Minister Michel Rocard, easily the most popular with the public, and Laurent Fabius, a former premier and now Speaker of the French Assembly (the No. 3 spot in the party hierarchy, after Mitterrand and Rocard). But both men are hated within the party, and their efforts to seize the initiative at Rennes were frustrated by the confused malicious politicking of no less than seven factions.

Rocard defended his government and dangled the rhetorical excesses of the day with distaste between finger and thumb; but his speech was not so much serious as boring, his performance not so much laidback as horizontal. Fabius, the acceptable face of opportunism, was fabulous, "caring", aggressive, a man for all treasons. But then the toads chose to ally against the princes, trying out every possible mix of positions that would deny them. All this was no doubt very pleasing for the party's third prince, Jacques Delors, who has yet to chuck his own hat into the bloodied ring. Meanwhile, Mitterrand's socialists have lost one of their main political advantages—they are now quite palpably as splintered as the right.

Dunce's cap?

Mrs Thatcher's poll tax is a political juggernaut, crushing the reputations of all her colleagues who have anything to do with it. It's now Chris Patten's turn. Against his own better judgment, the Environment Secretary has to do something decisive, and to try and shift the political blame from the government's back to local authorities by picking out a sample of "high-spenders" for capping. The trick is, of course, to pick out those choice scapegoats, "loony left" Labour councils.

But can the DOE repeat the success it undoubtedly had with the previous rate-capping exercise? It doesn't look like it. First, nearly one in four councils have exceeded the government's Standard Spending Assessment and its estimate of their poll tax level; Tory authorities are in general almost as much over the government's figures as Labour; and several figure prominently among what the media still unhesitatingly call "overspenders.

Every which way the DOE turns the figures, Tory authorities seem almost bound to foul the net. Take a model which combines, say, being 12.5 per cent above SSA and "target" spending per head of population. That catches about 20 authorities, including the usual inner London Labour culprits, but—oh dear!—here too is Tory Kensington and Chelsea, Tory-SLD Hillingdon, and Tory Berkshire. A mischievous example perhaps; but Patten will have to be smart at maths to avoid the dunce's cap.

Mrs Thatcher's governments have persistently penalised single-parent families. But Major has signalled a change of heart, with his award of a 10 per cent raise in one single mum's state benefit.› The Princess Royal has been given an extra £14,100 to manage without Mark. We look forward to the impact of that famous trickle-down effect on state benefits for other parents.

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LETTERS

A father's rights

Phyllis Chesler writes ("Pound of flesh", 9 March) that 62-70 per cent of custody battles are awarded to the father on the basis of his sex and economic superiority, despite the "popular myth" that judges are biased against men. Ms Chesler might be surprised to learn that many men relinquish custody of their children by "parental choice" because of the unsuitability of their circumstances as regards the task at hand. Those few who think themselves in a better position to raise their offspring sometimes are, and that is why they contest, and win, custody.

The male demand for equal custodial rights is not the demand for a law which values legal paternity, or "male economic superiority", over (biological) motherhood. I doubt that "economic superiority" is a serious issue at all, though economic self-sufficiency is probably relevant when considering a "child's best interests". Fathers do not win custody simply because they make more money than their wives (mine didn't!).

Arguing that a man's contract with a woman about his sperm is considered sacred, and that pregnancy and childbirth are not, is oversimplification. Fathers play more than an economic role, and non-biological mothers can give valid maternal care. An infant will also be the bone of its father's bone, the apple of his eye! Custody should not be automatically awarded because of the status of motherhood, and vice versa.

Julien Uzzell
Hull
N Humberside

A mother's role

Come on, Rose Shapiro. Why brush off the "Baby M" case with a trivial discussion of a "peculiar America" full of poodle funerals and facelifts? ("Giving up baby", 9 March)

The "Baby M" case *is* about the commodification of babies and, as Phyllis Chesler's failed analysis illustrates, ("Pound of flesh, 9 March) the mystification of motherhood. Although "Baby M" is not British, the issues surrounding the case are wholly pertinent to the UK. Government policy on "the family" practically insists on parent "ownership" of children, and discriminates against mothers who *happen to need or want any other* gainful employment besides that of mothering. Although none of this has yet made a dramatic appearance on *Wogan*, the issues are a little less "peculiar" than you indicate.

Susan Reinhold
Linden Gardens
London W2

Tackling ageism

I feel I really must comment on Melanie Henwood's article ("When it comes to the crunch", 2 March) in which she writes about the Herculean task facing health and local authorities in providing services for elderly people.

The problems highlighted in the article demonstrate that if it were not for a poorly built and inhospitable environment older people would be able to manage fairly well, in other words we manufacture their dependence. Those who would and indeed do need help are fairly small, 83,000 people spread over the whole of the UK should be no problem to this affluent society.

Ms Henwood talks about the need of health authorities to "unblock beds". The term "bed blocker" has been used in the past to describe elderly people and it is an insult and deflects attention away from the real issues. True older people heal more slowly and take longer to rehabilitate but this is not their fault. The fact that they do need a bed for longer, and it is therefore not available for another patient, is really the fault of the manager and planners for failing to provide adequate beds to service the local communities in line with the population needs.

Let us stop seeing older people as a challenge and a burden and start directing attention at the managers, planners and politicians who fail to make adequate provisions for the public whatever their age.

We seek longevity and congratulate ourselves if we manage to reduce the number of deaths from coronary heart disease, but we do not see the older population as a real benefit, bemoaning the fact that there will be more old people by the year 2001. Perhaps if we could acknowledge the real benefits of an older, wiser and experienced population we could identify the created dependency and tackle the ageism which exists in our society—that is the real challenge.

Liz Day
Gerontology Student
St Peters Close
Maidstone
Kent

Sour apple

While I found Alexander Cockburn's article on New York's property-go-round ("Real moolah", 23 February) most informative and stimulating, it nevertheless had a hole in it.

This could have been filled, and the article made the more trenchant, if his critique of US capitalisms' free market shortcomings had included some consideration of the extent to which the New York real estate markets are predicated upon extremely generous handouts to developers from the public purse. This particularly invidious example of the inverse care law ensures that the speculative bubble—which so effectively shelters the rich, while exploiting and exposing the poor—is maintained aloft by an admixture of city and state financial guarantees and underwrites, (frequently in pursuit of not always forthcoming planning gains to the city), land discounts, tax abatements together with generous low cost energy supply contracts.

This City Hall cum state legislature stratagem, of politically sponsoring greed against need, is what ensures, as does the planning and zoning system, that Big Bucks go to Trumps, leaving loose change for the citizens of South Bronx and Queens.

Roger Moore
University of Cambridge
Sidgwick Avenue
Cambridge

A moderate ACTT

I am surprised that a journal of the left should make such a distorted report concerning this union, ie ".. shades of Arthur Scargill... in Alan Sapper's committee which disqualified the successful moderate candidate for president of the Association of Cinematograph Television and allied Technicians because there were '—too many words' in his campaign statement."

The facts are these:—It was not "Alan Sapper's committee" (there is no such thing) but our annual Conference and it did not disqualify a successful moderate candidate—it re-held a ballot because of a number of improprieties, only one of which was the excessively long statement.

I personally have no doubt that had Brian Forbes stood again, he would have been elected president, but he chose to stand down.

Since my own commitment to the Liberal Democrats is well-known, it may reasonably be said that for two years ACTT has in fact had a "moderate" president, which rather makes nonsense of your editorial.

Tudor Gates
President
ACTT
London W1

Lay visitors' schemes

Your otherwise interesting item ("Knock knock. Who's there?", 9 March) is factually wrong in one respect. There is no "deal", formal or informal that a London borough will "get a lay visitors' scheme", if that borough takes up its place on the consultative group. To prove the point, in *all* five of the London boroughs where the majority political party does not participate in consultation, there is a thriving lay visitors' panel.

Richard Monk
New Scotland Yard
Broadway
London SW1

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Aerial views

Michael Scott's clear, technically sound article ("Signal failures", 9 March), is spoilt by his failure to acknowledge the circumstances under which decisions were made during the Gibraltar shooting.

The army, whose technical knowledge was amply demonstrated by Captain Edwards at the inquest, were faced with three known terrorists walking away from a car, parked in a public place, which had an "oreintated" aerial (capable of being electronically lengthened to the correct wavelength). They had moments to decide not only whether or not a bomb was in place, but also if it was possible for a VHF (30 to 300 MHz) signal to reach the car from a moving transmission point. The characteristics of VHF signals are well established. However, they are notoriously unpredictable in built-up areas, and they are often improved by a little movement.

In contrast to the army's apparent ignorance, I should imagine that members of Bomb Disposal are, by necessity, very competent. As a result they probably take a dim view of the "I'm going for the blue wire" approach to their trade, as demonstrated by Mr Scott's airy assertion that "unscrewing the aerial or cutting it off" was all that was needed.

G A Tranter
Reeves Avenue
Bootle
Merseyside

In his excellent article. Mr Scott states that, "the optimal length of an aerial is a simple function of the frequency used". The optimal length of a whip aerial is a quarter of a wavelength, the wavelength being determined by the following formula: 1=300/f, where "1" is the wavelength in metres and "f" is the frequency in Megahertz (MHz). Thus, to find the optimum frequency of a whip aerial length "y", the formula is reversed to give the new formula f=300/4y, where "y" is the wavelength in metres and "f" is the frequency in MHz. The car's whip aerial was 30 inches long ie 0.762 metres long. If this figure is put into the equation as "y" the frequency ("f") = 300/(4 x 0.762) = 98.425 MHz, which is in the heart of the commercial VHF FM broadcast band—not an unreasonable frequency for a car radio aerial to be tuned to. I am afraid that, unlike Mr Scott, I am not familiar with the tone-decoding equipment used by the IRA, but I would hazard that they would not run the risk of using a "button frequency" probably used by a powerful commercial station, which could accidentally trigger a hypothetical bomb.

A further note of possible interest: I was acquainted with, and well-versed in the use of, the formula on which I based my calculations when I was 14. It is on the syllabus for the Radio Amateurs Examination which is frequently taken (and passed) by 14 year olds, not to mention a handful of 12-14 year olds every year, as well as being on the syllabus of the old Oxford and Cambridge Board's O-level Physics paper.

This is the formula Mr Feraday should have used to calculate the optimal frequency of the car aerial, and was either completely ignorant of, or profoundly incompetent in the use of. Perhaps the Poll Tax now levied on the armed forces could be used to fund the education of the MOD's "professors".

M James
Aberdeen Terrrace
London SE3

THIS ENGLAND

● The Cecil family gathered in force this week at their stately home, to pay their last respects and an unusual tribute to their butler. Jim Curtis, who was with the family for 56 years, was the first servant to be given a funeral in the family chapel. "He was just like a member of the family", says Lady Victoria Leatham, daughter of the 6th Marquess of Exeter. "I don't know what we'll do without him."—*Daily Telegraph* (Richard Olszewski)

● Two Punjabi teenagers have been banned by the Foreign Office from entering Britain to attend their murdered uncle's funeral because they failed a test on how many water buffalo their father owned.—*Guardian* (Angela Bibb)

● The idea of a 65-year-old woman having sex with a 29-year-old man would repulse most people. But reverse the situation and cast Paul Newman as the 65 year old and the whole thing seems quite acceptable —Film review in the *Enfield Independent* (Richard Purver)

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DIARY

Sean French

In the 16 February issue of NSS I wrote an unfavourable review of Bruno Bettelheim's collection of essays, *Recollections and Reflections*. I was disturbed by his criticisms of Jewish victims of Nazi genocide, a fate that he himself had escaped through resilience but also through extreme good fortune. I observed that, unlike Primo Levi, Bettelheim seemed unable to acknowledge that some situations are so appalling that it doesn't matter whether you have a well-integrated personality or not. "Death is no better whined at than withstood", as Larkin said.

I finished the review as follows: "But of course Primo Levi committed suicide while Bruno Bettelheim has survived into his late eighties. There may be a moral there but it may only be Eliot's, that mankind cannot bear too much reality."

Last week, less than a month after the review appeared, Bruno Bettelheim, aged 86, committed suicide in a California nursing home. There were some obvious explanations: he was profoundly depressed after the recent death of his wife, he had recently suffered a stroke. There seemed something appropriately Bettelheimian about choosing death rather than a life of decline: "Men are not ants," he wrote at the end of his book about concentration camps, *The Informed Heart*. "They embrace death rather than an ant-like existence.

But the day of his death—the anniversary of Hitler's invasion of Austria, the moment when the culture that had formed him was swept away—must have been significant. Weakened by illness and loss, did he finally find the Nazi horror too much to bear?

I feel some sadness about what I wrote. The idea that he could have read it in his distraught, suicidal state is not pleasant. And I find it difficult to know what to make of the act itself. Is it a sign of failure, an act of self-refutation? Or, quite the contrary, is it a final admirable gesture of self will by a man on the verge of disintegration?

I don't know, and it might be an appropriate mark of respect to cease from any more impudent, intrusive speculation.

The actor David Suchet was once appearing in a television drama—playing Sigmund Freud, I think—which featured a close-up of his eye. Shortly afterwards a doctor wrote to him advising him to seek urgent medical attention. He had noticed certain signs in the actor's eye signifying a coronary illness.

I sometimes anticipate receiving a letter of a similar kind, from a psychiatrist perhaps, informing me that my column has been displaying unmistakable signs of clinical disorder and would I please seek instant attention. This isn't as impossible as it sounds. In Kathleen Tynan's biography of her husband, Kenneth Tynan, she described how he once had a nervous breakdown in the course of writing a theatre review. He began with a sensible account of a play he had seen and then veered into a description of the problems he faced making a television programme. He concluded, "Next week Orson Welles will be in this space, outrageously correct." He handed in the article as if it were nothing unusual and was swiftly despatched to a psychiatrist.

I haven't—consciously at any rate—reached that stage, but while looking for my Bruno Bettelheim review I was puzzled by a recent Diary in which I described myself as having a phobia about rites of passage.

This is not just silly but inaccurate—as I was reminded last Sunday when I went to a circumcision ceremony for the first time. Oddly, none of the Jewish men I spoke to had attended the ceremony before—except for their own, presumably—and they didn't know quite what to expect. One even told me—quite inaccurately—that proceedings concluded with the severed foreskin being passed around.

I now realise that what I object to is the staidness and solemnity of Christian rites. I come from a Lutheran background in which the only relationship that matters is that between you and a god who is both vengeful and probably non-existent.

I was amazed and moved by the earthiness of the circumcision ceremony. The doctor who carried it out described it as the second birth. It was all about fellowship and food, performed with a good deal of humour.

An intensely sexual ritual, fetishising the male organ of procreation, it has also turned out to be practical. A (non-Jewish) doctor told me that circumcision substantially reduces the risk of contracting HIV and eliminates the threat of penile cancer altogether.

It was an intensely impressive social event but, as the above account suggests, it is inescapably rooted in a social code in which men are admitted to the community as independent persons and women are not. (Female circumcision, which is a Muslim not a Jewish practice, is very different.)

I doubt whether religions can ever really escape the archaic sexism of their roots, though admittedly Lutheranism has come pretty close. Female priests abound and you only need to look at the films of Ingmar Bergman to see that existential angst has been shared with absolute fairness between the sexes.

A week of small triumph for the *NSS* as we competed against *The Listener* in the Radio Four quiz show, *The Year in Question*, in which we were interrogated entirely on events in 1958, a year in which my only significant action was to be conceived.

Our team was, it must be said, poorly prepared. Our team captain, Philip Dodd, had researched only one fact and that turned out to be incorrect. Stephen Howe's knowledge of French politics in the period kept us in touch but with a few minutes to go we were well behind. However in a breathless few minutes of frantic, and probably illegal button pushing, we edged past on the very last question. As Vince Lombardi put it so aptly, winning isn't the main thing, it's the only thing.

In the semi-final we meet the *Green Magazine*, who outpointed the *Economist*, another sign that Britain is changing (though oddly enough it was the Greens who wore the Young Conservative suits and the Economists who looked like bike boys). A further report on our triumph or disaster next week.

ROGER WODDIS

Helping with enquiries

After writing a letter to his local paper about the poll tax and the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, Dave Roddy of Royton, near Oldham, Lancashire, was visited by two plainclothes policemen, who warned him, over a cup of tea, that he might be inciting trouble

Wat Tyler, he came up from Kent
To talk about a tax
And ask the king, the peasants' friend,
To lift it from their backs.
The Mayor of London drew his sword
And stopped him in his tracks.

A serf in 1381,
Who dared to stand his ground
Could not expect to die in bed,
As Wat at Smithfield found.
Today they simply note complaints
And send the coppers round.

"Good morning, sir," they said to Dave,
As nice as nice can be.
"We've called to have a little chat—
Assuming that you're free."
They were so sweet, they had no need
Of sugar in their tea.

They cautioned him, but being kind
Did not detain him long.
Dave Roddy led no peasant band
A hundred thousand strong;
But twenty million on the march
Can't all of them be wrong.

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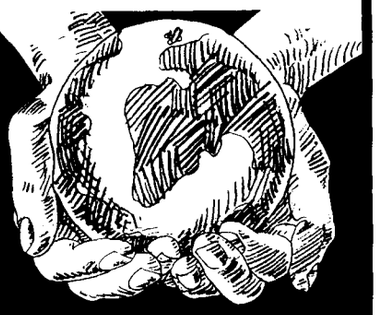
The rescue operation must begin now



1001 WAYS TO SAVE THE PLANET

Bernadette Vallely

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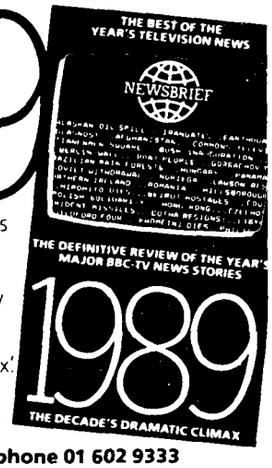
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NEWSBRIEF

NICARAGUA

DEFEND THE GAINS OF THE REVOLUTION!

Ten years of freedom and progress

In the first ten years of the Nicaraguan Revolution, the Sandinista government put into practice policies giving land to those who worked it, free education, free health care and free elections, despite US aggression and the contra war.

So why did the Sandinistas lose the 1990 elections?

Eight years of US military and economic violence left many people in Nicaragua believing the only way to end the contra war, lift the trade embargo and get the US off their backs was to vote for UNO, the 14 party coalition backed and openly financed by President Bush.

No return to death squads

The US must not be allowed to turn the clock back and reverse the social advances made by the people of Nicaragua, nor to introduce the repression and death squads that dominate El Salvador and Guatemala. The contra must be demobilised.

The main reason for hope is that the advances in land reform, health and education are enshrined in the Nicaraguan constitution. The Sandinistas, still the largest party in the National Assembly, have pledged to defend those achievements and have called on UNO to do likewise. We have a duty to support them.

I want to help the NSC defend the gains of the Nicaraguan Revolution. I enclose

£100 ☐ £50 ☐ £25 ☐ £10 ☐ £5 ☐ other ☐

Name

Address

Postcode

Please send me information on how I can continue to support the Revolution ☐

Return to Box S, Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 23 Bevenden Street, London N1 6BH.

Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign

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A hard night in the "soft room"

A long night stretches ahead at the 24-hour psychiatric emergency clinic at the Maudsley Hospital. The only one of its kind in the country, it is threatened with closure due to a budget shortfall. Callum Murray spent a night there watching the medical team cope with the mentally ill

It's 7pm on a Friday evening and Dr Peter Woodruff, psychiatrist on duty at the Maudsley's emergency clinic, emerges from one of the bare, white interview rooms. These lead off the reception area—high ceilinged, with a new carpet, plastic furniture and overflowing ashtrays—where a young man and a middle-aged woman wait to see the doctor.

Dr Woodruff has been talking to Colin, a young man with a severe, manic depressive illness. In the past week he has left his job and has been wandering the streets, talking in a grandiose way. His wife, Sheila, who is sitting in reception, is very, very worried.

The doctor thinks he needs to be "sectioned" (Section 2 of the Mental Health Act allows for a patient to be detained in hospital for 28 days, provided that the order is signed by two psychiatrists and a social worker). Steven Jones, the charge nurse, phones a psychiatrist at nearby East Dulwich hospital for a second opinion. "There's only one social worker on duty in the borough tonight," he explains, "and cases such as child abuse have priority." The order permits the social worker's signature to be replaced by that of the nearest relative, and Steven thinks Sheila will be willing to provide it. He tells the other nurses he has locked the side door, "just to contain this gentleman".

Dr Woodruff turns his attention to the young man in reception. His name is Toni, and he is an out-patient at the Maudsley but says he has run out of medication. He gets suicidal when he doesn't have any. He feels like thirsting himelf to death. "What does that mean?" asks the doctor. "Not drinking any tea or water or anything," Toni replies. He is 26 and wears a black jacket, jeans, grey shoes and no socks. Sometimes he holds his head with his hand. The phone rings and the doctor has to leave the room. Toni goes on talking, not looking at me: "Hope I get well soon. I hope I'll be well in the summer. I've been depressed for six years. It's horrible. Can you imagine what that's like?" Toni is given some medication to last him until his next out-patient appointment, and leaves.

Keith Lloyd, the psychiatrist from East Dulwich hospital, has arrived. He has assessed Colin and will support Dr Woodruff's application for a Section 2. "I have little doubt that he's clearly relapsing," he says. He tells me there is a quotation in a book by Anthony Clare that is relevant to Colin's situation. It says: "Everybody has the *right* to be detained in hospital against their will." Colin, meantime, is pacing around reception.

Steven is talking to a big man in a green T-shirt at the entrance to the office. I notice the man slipping something into his back pocket as Steven guides him towards the main exit.

When Steven comes into the office, he explains what happened. "That bloke comes in here with an alcometer reading of 320 and says he's only had three cans of lager. Then he pulls out a diver's knife and says: 'What would the charge be if I slit your throat?'" The other two nurses are horrified. No one else had seen the diver's knife. "It was just drunken bravado," says Steven.

"This is the quietest Friday evening for as long as I can remember," says Debbie, another member of the three-strong nursing team. "It give me the heeby-jeebies." In three weeks, Debbie is leaving nursing: "It's very demoralising," she says. "Patients are on what we call 'the revolving door syndrome' because there's no community service or support outside."

At 8pm, Steven makes a phone call to request a "crash team" to help with a Section 2. The crash team, which is trained to deal with violent patients, arrives and crowds into the office. There are seven of them, including the clinic's three nurses. The rest are nurses from other parts of the hospital and a porter. Three are women. All are dressed in casual clothes. There are no white coats in the Maudsley.

Dr Woodruff has obtained Sheila's signature for a Section 2 and phones a hospital in Colin's catchment area to arrange for admittance. "What we're looking at is just making him safe in the clinic," Steven tells the crash team. "If he refuses the oral, he's going to need the IV (intravenous sedation)." Each man in the team is assigned to grab an arm or a leg, should it become necessary. The crash team then follows Dr Woodruff into reception. The oral is a clear liquid in a beaker. Debbie is last out. "Please take it," she whispers, as she goes.

The doctor is talking to Colin. The crash

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Julia Powell

Toni gets suicidal without medication. He feels like thirsting himself to death

team are leaning against the desk, or standing back, watching. "To you it's a psychiatric hospital, to me it's a *mental* hospital," argues Colin. Dr Woodruff holds the oral out to him. He doesn't take it, but he is persuaded to go with the crash team to Room 2. This is the "soft room", equipped with soft furniture to prevent patients injuring themselves or others. His wife is being comforted by the receptionist.

At 8.30, Debbie comes out of Room 2. "He's taken the oral," she tells Colin's wife. There is a great release of tension. The wife is almost laughing with relief—some of the responsibility for Colin now rests with others, and not just her. "One question, a stupid question, a woman's question," she says. "Does he need any money to buy a toothbrush or anything?"

"He took it like a lamb," Steven tells me. "There were a lot of us there. I'm pleased so many answered. If you don't have enough, that's when you have trouble." It's 8.45. The doctor has gone to rest in his room upstairs. He's been working since 9am.

Colin passes me on his way to the ambulance. "Goodbye, thanks," he says. "Good luck," I say. Just before getting into the ambulance he asks a nurse to ask his wife to bring his ordinary guitar, his electric guitar and all his bits. She promises to do it.

A patient that the clinic has been expecting from Guy's Hospital arrives and is ready for interviewing. Ken is from Glasgow. He is about 40, thin and shaking. He drinks 20 cans of lager and a bottle of vodka a day. He has tried to kill himself three times. "There's nothing left for me now," he says. "I'm just going to go down and down, but if I get myself sorted out I'd like to look after old people, go to college, get an 'O' level."

The doctor asks him what he thinks of himself. "I'm a fucking arsehole, that's what I think of myself at the moment," says Ken.

Each man in the team is assigned to grab an arm or a leg. The crash team follows the doctor

The interview lasts more than an hour. The doctor decides to give Ken a bed in the hospital. He explains: "Normally we wouldn't admit a straightforward alcoholic, but he's got so many social problems." Ken rose to phone his wife while he's waiting to be admitted. When he returns, I sit with him in reception. His wife isn't pleased, he says. I tell him about the threat to close down the emergency unit. "If they shut down this place," says Ken, "it's going to be a loss, it is. It's too good a place to shut down."

At midnight, the nurses let in a man who is obviously very sick. He looks lost; limping slowly, head down, he follows Dr Woodruff to an interview room.

The sick man is psychotic and needs to be admitted to hospital. He was recently discharged from the Bethlem Royal and has been staying in a hostel. But he hasn't been taking his medication and has relapsed. He hasn't eaten. "If these patients weren't treated, they'd die of dehydration and starvation," says Dr Woodruff.

At 1.20am, the patient and an escort depart in a taxi for the Bethlem. There are no further emergencies at the clinic that night—at any rate none that the nurses can't deal with. It's been a quiet night, the doctor agrees.

If the emergency clinic were closed down, one option would be to see patients in the King's College Hospital casualty department across the road. "That would be very unsatisfactory," Dr Woodruff says. "There are people being brought in who have had cardiac arrests or been in fights. It's chaos there..." ●

Consent forms were signed by patients who allowed the author to attend their interviews. The names of all patients and other details, including ages and places have been changed to ensure anonymity.

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Heseltine swoops—to conquer?

For four years, Michael Heseltine has been preparing for the Tory succession. But what does he offer? Rob Shepherd provides a guide to the man and his thinking

In the looking-glass world of Tory politics, Michael Heseltine denies his leadership ambitions as trenchantly as ministers publicly deny flaws in the poll tax. But he has run a presidential-style campaign for the Tory succession ever since he walked out of Thatcher's cabinet four years ago. The contest is now well and truly on.

That it is, at this stage, a two-horse race between Thatcher and Heseltine reveals much about them both. She has forced rivals to quit the cabinet room and has wilfully failed to groom a successor. It would be a supreme irony if the result was to clear the path for someone who is so palpably not "one of us". He, meanwhile, has seized every opportunity to enhance his leadership claim from the obscurity of the backbenches, an accomplishment without parallel since Winston Churchill's in the 1930s.

The balloon really went up earlier this month. During the Commons debate on the economy, Tory MPs had rushed from the tea-rooms to hear him, delighted that at last someone on their own side was whistling a good tune. Their excited response set the alarm bells ringing behind the iron gates of Downing Street. Variations on that Thatcherite golden-oldie, "Stop Heseltine" (chorus, "He's too impetuous"), were hurriedly composed, most notably by the Lords Stevens and Wyatt, in the *Daily Express* and the *Times*. Claim and counter-claim have followed, generating even more heat but shedding little light.

What remains little understood is Heseltine's strategy and what kind of Tory leader and prime minister he would be. If he is to succeed Thatcher, he will need to overcome formidable, but not insurmountable, problems. Not the least of them is Thatcher's own well publicised determination to stay on; and her less publicised will to stop him, stemming from a conviction that he, more than any other non-Thatcherite, would undo the Thatcherite revolution. Then, of course, there are the rival contenders inside (and outside) her cabinet.

Heseltine's further problem is that any sign of personal disloyalty towards Thatcher would stir Tory backbench folk-memories of Westland, when he almost brought her down. John Biffen, who speaks warmly of Heseltine despite policy differences, observes with Shakespearean metaphor that "if Heseltine is seen to have willed the dagger, he won't inherit the Crown". He must continue to play a waiting game.

Yet Heseltine has one crucial asset: he looks every part a winner. Iain Macleod, who suffered few illusions about his fellow Tories, observed that the Conservative Party exists to win. Nothing has changed. As Philip Norton's recent study of factions among Tory MPs demonstrates, neither the Thatcherites nor the wet/damp critics can muster 20 per cent of support. Just over half the Tory MPs are simply party loyalists. Their support for the leader is contingent on him or her remaining a winner at the polls.

Heseltine's "winability" derives in part from his unrivalled ability to rouse the party faithful, even though the showman is suppressed beneath an increasingly prime ministerial demeanour. But he also appears to offer the party something new. Though few Tory MPs read his speeches, let alone his books, they

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sense that he provides answers where ministers proffer alibis.

But what does Heseltine's prospectus amount to? The Tory right is suspicious, despite his patriotic gesture politics as defence secretary and his impeccable credentials on privatisation (he pushed through the sale of council homes and supports the privatisation of electricity and water). He is accused of "lego Keynesianism", being too close to Labour on economic policy and too much like Edward Heath on Europe.

On the Tory left, there is confusion about where to place him; Tory wets sense that he is a compassionate Tory but suspect he is a fake.

There are four core components to his "caring capitalism". First and foremost, to give industry pre-eminence in policy making without resorting to the bureaucratic planning associated with a sixties-style National Plan or a seventies-style industrial strategy. He repeatedly emphasises the need for partnership, with the government at one remove and entrepreneurs being encouraged to behave in their own best interest. The models are present-day Germany and Japan (on which a book is promised in the autumn), not George Brown or Tony Benn. As part of his long-term strategy, he would, like Labour's John Smith, give a big boost to education, training and research and development.

Second, Heseltine is probably the most European-minded politician in Britain today. His single strongest conviction is that the European Community must progress towards closer economic and political unity, and that Britain must play a central role. It's here that he can cut a positive public figure, but in a Tory party that is liable to split over Europe, he takes care to signal that he is conscious both of the practical problems and the political sensitivities involved in pursuing an old-style federalist approach.

Heseltine is a self-proclaimed "One Nation" Tory, but he was never a wet; he's too eclectic in his choice of ideas from the political landscape for anything so precise. Time and again, he reiterates his belief that privilege brings obligations. "The Tory recognises the contrast between *laissez-faire* and *noblesse oblige*," he asserted in a major speech on community care last week. What sets him apart from the paternalism of the Whitelaws and Pyms is that while they tend to let sleeping dogs lie, Heseltine positively searches out problems and embraces change. He's inherited more from Macleod than Baldwin.

In his beliefs on such issues as capital punishment and race, he sticks to the liberal Tory ticket of Boyle and Butler. He proudly claims to have laid the ghost of Enoch Powell at the 1981 Conservative conference. Probably only Heseltine among modern Tories could have won applause from the party faithful while asserting the Britishness of immigrant communities.

Finally, Heseltine is an interventionist: and especially in the inner cities and industry. He has strong ideas about how to deal with the crisis of the inner city, poorer regions and what the modern-minded call "the underclass". But he believes in fashioning new agencies and new mechanisms, not employing local authorities or extending the welfare state, and he supports "workfare" for the unemployed.

He has almost single-handledly kept the belief in an interventionist industrial policy alive within the Tory party. He claims to be under no illusion about the scale of the challenge which Britain will face in the single market of the 1990s after yet another wasted decade of low industrial investment. Indeed, part of his appeal is that only he has devised a strategy which can enable a capitalist, entrepreneurial economy to make the necessary painful adjustments.

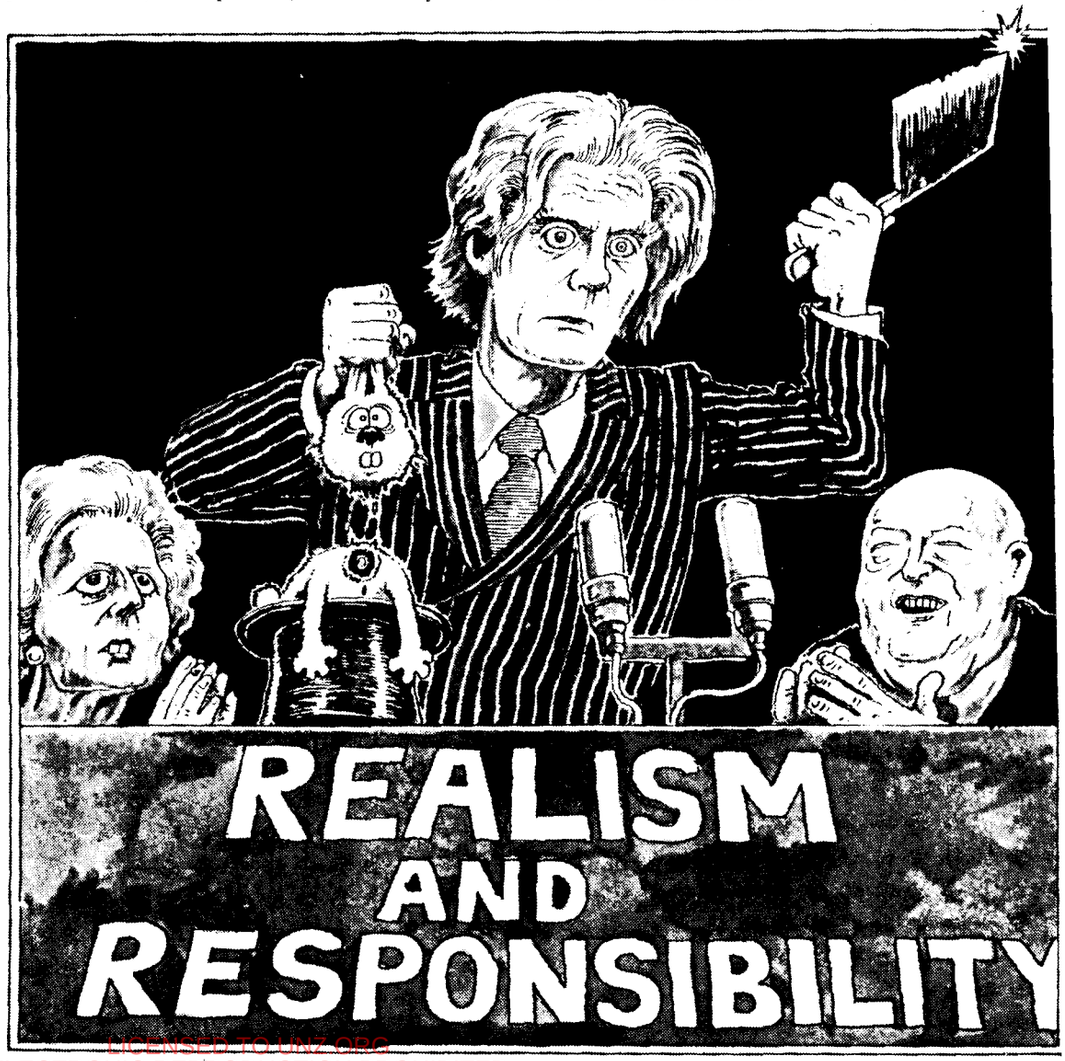
Heseltine points out that even the present government is directly involved in decisions on funding industry through a plethora of schemes, but does so willy-nilly. His central reforms would be to create a Cabinet committee on industrial policy and also have the Secretary of State chair meetings of the National Economic Development Council.

The Thatcherite experiment looks like collapsing in confusion, but so far there's no sign of Heseltine building the same kind of consensus around his approach as developed around monetarism and market economics in the mid-1970s. His recent suggestion that the Bank of England should become independent and be responsible for monetary policy was an astute move to reassure Tory monetarists. One senior Tory, a European sceptic, interpreted it as a signal that Heseltine was distancing himself from Delors-style bureaucratic economic and monetary union in Europe, and advocating a freer association based on the Bundesbank lynchpin. But it is an idea which has positive resonances in the centre too. Heselteenies argue that the proposed reform would still allow the government to retain ultimate control of monetary policy, but that any change would be public and not, as at present, conducted by a nudge and a wink.

His dilemma in office would be to strike the right balance between the "tough" necessities of industrial reconstruction and the "tender" social policies which would cushion people through the transition. His policies would also require short-term sacrifice in the hope of long-term pay-offs. But for how long would the Tory party, with its aversion to institutional reform, be prepared to wear the experiment, especially when the political going got rough? Heseltine could certainly expect continual sniping from Thatcherite Young Turks in the "No Turning Back" Group.

In a crucial respect, however, Heseltine might well be tougher on economic policy than Thatcher, despite her rhetoric. In cabinet he never sided with those arguing for extra public spending as an end in itself. His critique of the Thatcher years is that Britain has continued to consume too much and has not invested in the future. He has criticised the tax reliefs on mortgages and pensions for channelling investment away from industry, though in response to queries about removing them, he says "you can't take away from people that which they have been given". But he would have no qualms about using public funds to boost investment, and this in turn raises implications for social welfare provision.

With longer-term industrial reconstruction, education and training given priority, other current spending programmes would have to be squeezed unless overall spending was substantially increased. Heseltine has recently endorsed the concept of a "safety net", recalling the words of Winston Churchill: "We want to



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have free competition upwards—we decline to allow free competition to run downwards." He proposes a "computerised, integrated tax and benefit system" to provide entitlements more effectively. But this still begs the question. When pressed on his impact on social welfare budgets, Heseltine responds that each programme would be debated "case by case".

Heseltine is an endless innovator. While environment secretary (1979-83), as part of his search for value for money in public spending, he devised "MINIS", a management system which enabled ministers to monitor the performance of each section of their department. This won him few friends at cabinet, where most ministers did not regard management as part of their job. MINIS delivered savings and led to senior officials and ministers becoming conscious of the need to manage resources efficiently. At Defence (1983-86), he reformed the armed services' command structure and opened up a larger share of defence procurement contracts to competitive tender.

Like the Prime Minister, Heseltine has a deep distrust of public sector professionals and also has no qualms about putting the national mandate before the local mandate. He supports the government's housing, school and NHS reforms, arguing that they put more power in the hands of the people and that the approach should be extended: "the state should be an 'enabler' rather than a 'provider'."

It is for his inner city policies, where he was ready to impose solutions on local areas that Heseltine is best remembered as a minister. The origins of his policy for London Docklands reveal much about the way the man operates. As minister for aerospace in the Heath government, he frequently flew over the East End and saw the dereliction of the docks. It was not then his responsibility, but it made a strong impression. The plans to create a London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) were initiated within days of his being appointed environment secretary in 1979, those for Merseyside (the MDC) following a little later.

Following the 1981 riots and his own visit to Liverpool, he argued in a cabinet paper, "It Took a Riot", that public funds had to be used to prime the pump of private sector development. He faced fierce opposition from the Treasury, but the government has subsequently created more UDCs. Both the LDDC and MDC have been subsequently criticised for their strong initial emphasis on market-led physical regeneration to the exclusion of the needs of the local community.

As the Commons select committee on employment reported in 1988, unemployment was still higher in the LDDC area than when it was created, in 1981. The MDC has found it hard to attract private capital, and has created very few new jobs.

Heseltine's response is to contrast London's docklands and Liverpool's waterfront in 1979 and today: if it had been left to the local authorities, nothing would have happened. The initial outlay of public spending was crucial for any revival. Though he admits "responsibility, but not culpability" for by-passing the local community in docklands, he maintains that physical regeneration had to come first.

On Merseyside, he is credited with at least having seen the problems for himself, bringing change and being "a friend at court". As Michael Parkinson, Director of the Urban Studies Centre at Liverpool University, observes, the MDC has had its problems, but a comparison with other agencies in the region over the past decade prompts "a more benign view".

Heseltine most regrets not having set up an English Development Agency, on the lines of the Scottish and Welsh agencies. He doesn't trust local authorities, and last week revived his proposal for directly elected mayors. He thinks that the French system, where national political figures also serve as mayors, would raise standards and create a better central-local relationship.

He wants to bring entrepreneurial practices into local government, and proposes that fewer funds should be allocated automatically to authorities, which would instead compete for a proportion of central government funding. Initially, this would apply to only a small part of the funds available. His assumption is that this would force the worst authorities to raise their standards as they saw others receiving more. The problem is that the people who would suffer most under the losing authorities would probably be those who most needed extra assistance.

Ever the consumate politician, it is difficult to believe that he believes propounding so many schemes is the best way to secure the Tory leadership. There is an element of the Jekyll and Hyde about him, of Leslie Titmuss incarnate and Lloyd George. If Tory MPs were to elect him leader, they would achieve the astonishing feat of having chosen three radicals in succession—Heath, Thatcher, Heseltine.●

... my conclusions and proposals are not based on my fear of further riots. They are based on my belief that the conditions and prospects in the cities are not compatible with the traditions of social justice and national evenhandedness on which our party prides itself.
It Took a Riot, Paper to Cabinet, August 1981

We now have big immigrant communities in British cities. Let this party's position be clear. They are British. They live here. They vote here.
Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, October 1981

If the basis of trust between the Prime Minister and her Defence Secretary no longer exists, there is no place for me with honour in such a Cabinet.
On his resignation from the government over the Westland affair, 9 January 1986.

It's rather a grand thing to say but I reckon people will remember me more for my garden than anything else.
On his landscape garden, Central TV 1986

The achievement of putting the fence round Molesworth in a night was the biggest thing that the Royal Engineers had done since they crossed the Rhine at the end of the second world war.
On the occasion when he wore a flak-jacket at RAF Molesworth, Central TV, 1986

I go to church, not often. I'm probably a sort of anxious-to-be-converted agnostic.
The Times, 13 May 1987

The *laissez-faire* idealists may hold that all government action, to the extent that it inhibits the free exercise of the citizen's will, must threaten his liberty and weaken his spirit. This is too romantic and impractical a guide for men and women who hold public office, and it has nothing to do with the Tory party.
Where There's a Will, 1987

I've always enjoyed political power and if I have an opportunity to exercise it in the interests of the Conservative Party and the country, of course I'll take it.
On his leadership ambitions, Marxism Today, March 1988

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Profit and loss

Bazoft's death sentence caused a hiccup in Britain's relations with Iraq; but now he's dead it's business as usual, says Nick Fielding

A few hours before *Observer* journalist Farzad Bazoft was hanged in a Baghdad gaol last Thursday, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein told a group of farmers on Iraqi television that the death sentence would be carried out. "The English are displeased with us," he said, "and want the old colonial days to come back."

The next day, Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd told the House of Commons he was temporarily recalling the British ambassador, postponing several ministerial visits by the Iraqis and sending home six military trainees. The Government, he said, had considered cutting its £250 million line of credit, but had to take into account that economic measures would not alter the stance of the Iraqi government and might well do more harm than good. According to some reports, Bazoft's criminal record influenced the British government's decision.

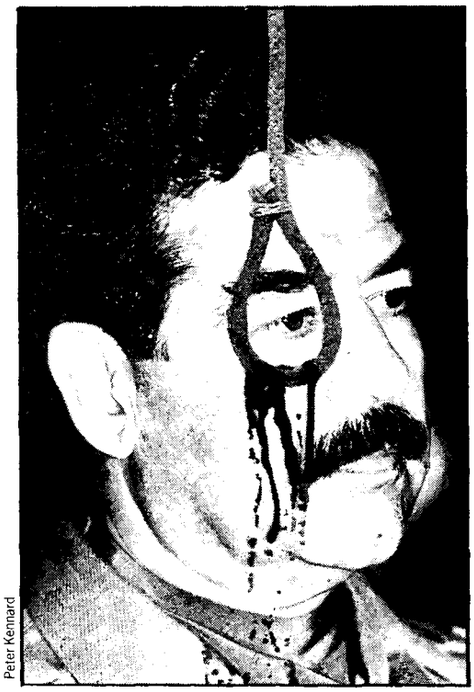
Roy Hattersley backed up Hurd, saying that Labour would support the strongest action the government felt it was possible to take. It was left to Lord Stoddart, in the House of Lords, to make the most principled point. "I must protest," he told minister of state Lord Brabazon of Tara. "A man's life has been forfeited and the minister talks about job losses in this country. Have we no morals left?"

Britain is now Iraq's third largest trading partner. Despite foreign debts totalling about £60 billion, Iraq offers the prospect of big contracts in its reconstruction programme following the end of the Iran-Iraq war. This explains why the government and British exporters continue to be interested in Iraq.

It is no accident that Saddam Hussein should have chosen this moment to remind Iraqis of Britain's former colonial role. It was Britain which created Iraq from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the first world war and ruled it as a mandate power until 1933. The growth of the nationalist movement, which eventually overthrew the pro-British monarchy in 1958, was due, in large part, to the deep sense of humiliation felt by many Iraqis at the way their country was governed.

Saddam himself built much of his early career opposing the British-dominated Iraq Petroleum Company and the economic stranglehold it held over the country until nationalisation in 1972. Despite recent growth in trade between the two countries, tensions remain.

But British governments have never allowed political differences with the various Iraqi regimes to interfere with trade for too long.



Peter Kennard

'A man's life has been forfeited and the minister talks of job losses in this country. Have we no morals'

Hurd's minimalist response to Bazoft's execution was backed by a chorus of businessmen and former diplomats, all anxious to preserve relations with Iraq. Lord Tombs, chairman of Rolls-Royce, whose subsidiary NEI has a £75 million contract to build four power station turbines in Iraq, said: "Any exporting company has to deal with unsavoury trading customers. But if we ceased trading with all of them we would cease trading in most parts of the world."

British companies with significant business interests in Iraq include Hawker Siddeley, which has completed an oil-fired power station and is now kitting out a tyre factory; Glaxo supplying drugs and medical equipment; the British Metro Consultant Group, which is hoping to run a scheme to build a £5 billion metro in Baghdad; Babcock International with a £150 million contract to build a power station.

Last year British Aerospace nearly clinched a £1 billion deal to supply Hawk training aircraft, but the deal was blocked by the Cabinet because it was thought to breach government policy on not supplying military equipment to Iraq. However, despite Britain's official neutrality in the Gulf war, in 1981 British companies signed contracts for £250 million worth of defence-related, but "non-lethal" equipment.

All British exports to Iraq are guaranteed by the Export Credit Guarantee Department. Over the past three years, the British government has provided Iraqis with more than £1 billion worth of credit to buy British goods and services. In 1988, for example, trade minister Tony Newton flew to Baghdad to sign an agreement which almost doubled trade credits to £340 million. At the time, Iraq was being castigated universally for a genocidal campaign of chemical warfare against Kurdish villagers in the north of the country. Britain chose not to comment.

The extent to which the British government was prepared to "overlook" inconvenient activity was illustrated by another event connected with Newton's visit. Twelve days after Newton signed the deal in Baghdad, it was revealed that four Iraqis had been expelled from Britain on 18 October. They were accused of "activities incompatible with their status"—in other words, spying. In retaliation, Iraq expelled three British diplomats. The incident was hushed up so as not to jeopardise Newton's visit.

There have been numerous other occasions when Britain has chosen to keep quiet rather than criticise Iraq. There was, for example, no condemnation of the Iraqi invasion of Iran which started the Gulf war nor of the armed occupation of the Iranian Embassy in London in 1980, which was carried out by Iraqi agents. "Accidental" attacks on UK-registered tankers during the Gulf war provoked only mild protests.

Britain is not the only country to trade with Iraq and many similar points could be made about France, West Germany, the United States, Italy and Japan. The Americans were even prepared to swallow the indignity of seeing one of their warships virtually destroyed by an Iraqi missile. They continued to supply the Iraqis with satellite intelligence on Iranian troop movements throughout the war.

Iraq's name stinks throughout the world and its abuses of human rights are well known and have been for many years. The British government's reaction, aside from the officially inspired smear campaign to discredit Bazoft, has been pitiful.

Saddam Hussein has correctly banked on the fact that Britain is prepared to put its commercial considerations above all else; and on the acquiescence or outright support of much of the Arab world, to which he owes around £25 billion, made available during the war against Iran. Iraq's military strength and political power have increased as a result of the war.

Britain has cut diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, Libya (over the murder of WPC Yvonne Fletcher) and Syria (over the Hindawi bomb attempt), but none of these countries was a significant trading partner. When it comes to real money, some things are above principle. ●

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Keep on running

Helmut Kohl took East Germany by storm, but in his own country his popularity appears to be waning. Chris Harvie looks at the fortunes of the German right at its moment of apparent triumph

Mark Power/Network

German losers: still loyal to the Trabant

As the first results of the East German election came through via satellite, the man next to me gasped, "Bayrisches Verhältnis!" and shook his head. At that point the figures suggested that the centre-right had over 55 per cent of the poll, the sort of result that Franz Josef Strauss's Christian Social Union used to manage in Bavaria, where its grip on power caused it to be referred to as the "Bayrisches Einheitspartei" (Bavarian Unity Party)—something comparable with Erich Honecker's Socialist Unity Party in the GDR!

The irony was that at that moment the local election results in Bavaria were also coming in, which showed the SPD humiliating the CSU by 63 per cent to 25 per cent in Munich. As the wealthiest folk of the Federal Republic were moving left, the "wretched of the earth" in Karl-Marx-Stadt were running right.

The vote for the Alliance for Germany denotes a remarkable—and perhaps embarrassing—success for Helmut Kohl, but not a recrudescence of German nationalism nor a triumph of right-wing market politics over "socialism". Kohl bought this victory with promises he will regret. Nightmares of the Conor Cruise O'Brien type—statues of Hitler as common in German towns as paintings of King Billy in Belfast—are inappropriate. The old Prussian province of Brandenburg, severed from the rest of Prussia by the Oder-Neisse line, voted left. Saxony and Thuringia, once fortresses of social democracy, provided the Alliance with its greatest successes.

Perhaps the most accurate rationalisation of the result is to remember that Kohl, like Adenauer, is a Catholic Rhinelander who, recognising that the GDR was still living in the 1950s, offered it a 1950s package: unity and the "social market" economics of Ludwig Erhard. The result was within a few percentage points of the CDU victory in West Germany in 1953—the high point of the Adenauer-Erhard partnership. However, there was a visible lack of proportion in the whole business: Kohl did not need, or indeed want, a victory on this scale, and he made promises which are going to be very, very hard to keep. And it's worrying that it was the internal politics of German conservatism which made him act this way.

The far right poses no direct problems. The drunken skinhead mouthing racialist abuse is much less dangerous than the naive boy-scoutish *Parteijugend*, now vanishing with the moribund Free German Youth of the Honecker regime.

The vote for the Alliance was not a triumph of right-wing market politics over socialism

The Republikaner Party of Franz Schonhuber, last year's menace, didn't break the five per cent barrier in the Saarland provincial elections in January, and recent polls suggest that they are unlikely to do so in the forthcoming federal elections. The problem, illustrated by the "overkill" of the CDU's campaigning in the east, is a dangerous deficit in strategic sense.

The roots of this lie in the élite of the German constitutional right, and its socio-political predicament. This group has a hermetic quality closer to communist practice than to the looser politics of the SPD and the Greens. Its leadership—Kohl is a typical example—is recruited while at university and works its way up through the party bureaucracy; its command of this makes it practically impregnable. In 1989, Kohl saw off challenges from Kurt Biedenkopf and Lothat Späth, figures of much greater originality and popularity outside the party machine; despite the overall economic success of his government, Kohl's popularity has been in steady decline.

This institutional constriction applies throughout German "national" institutions—the universities, where the ebbing of the "spirit of 68" has left an inflexible and inefficient professorial hierarchy, the broadcast media, the economic and agricultural pressure groups. This has been, in the 1980s, outweighed by industry and by the increasing importance of provincial politics, which have produced lively figures such as the CDU's Späth and Manfred Rommel, and the SPD's Oskar Lafontaine, Bjorn Engholm and Walter Momper. The upheavals in the GDR triggered a countervailing shift into a "German national" mode—by Willy Brandt (a great centraliser in his day) on the left as well as by Kohl—in an attempt to stop this continuing centrifugal movement.

Yet a similar process of decay also affects the right's grassroots; the elaborate labyrinth of *Stammtischpolitik* (pub-politics), local sport and shooting clubs, choirs and church societies, is in decay as German small town and village life splits up. The gainers from the economic

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The gainers from the economic miracle dream of their three-car garages

miracle move into ranch- or chalet-style estates on the village fringes, with three-car garages and swimming pools; *Gästarbeiter* take over the village centres, while the German losers drive 1970s Opels from decaying family farms

Helmut Kohl, recognising that East Germany still lived in the 1950s, offered it a 1950s package

or try to keep their little electrical business or "Tante Emma" store going against the competition of hypermarkets next to the motorway.

Add to this fears about the environment, an endemic housing shortage, the replacement of jobs by sophisticated new technology, underdeveloped service industries which curb job-creation for immigrants and the urban underclass (that effective integrator, the "open all hours" corner shop is legally impossible in Germany)—and the defensive "privatisation" of life style presents real problems of political organisation.

The problem was crystallised by Strauss's death in 1988. His CSU kept the far right in check, and fused regionalism, Europeanism and German nationalism. But since Strauss allowed no rivals, his CSU successors—Klein and company—are mediocrities, whose over-generous representation in the Bonn cabinet has done its reputation no good. Without him, not only was nationalism of a much cruder variety almost inevitable, but CSU politics, declining into the routine of the machine-men, lay open to the challenge of the Republikaner.

The CDU/CSU's oligarchs have surprisingly primitive connections with big business, which likes to present a non-partisan facade—the chiefs of the Bundesbank and Daimler Benz are SPD members. Spectacular scandals like the Flick affair have lessened with multinationalisation.

On the other hand, other politicians are making their long march through the CDU/CSU institutions—the Young Union, the women's and regional associations and, not least, the *Vertriebene*, groups of refugees from Silesia, the Sudetenland and east Prussia.

To Strauss's death was added the sequence of problems unleashed by one such: the young minister-president of Schleswig-Holstein, Uwe Barschel. Barschel rose in a Land (provincial) CDU dominated by *Vertriebene* and old Nazis, only to deploy a dirty tricks campaign in the 1988 elections, and kill himself when found out.

The result wasn't just a win for the SPD; it dislodged Gerhard Stoltenberg, the regional CDU chief, finance-minister and Kohl's main rival. Stoltenberg was replaced by one of the Munich men, Theo Waigel, who proceeded to echo the *Vertriebene* line, muttering darkly about restoring the frontiers of 1937.

Already under pressure from the SPD (who ought, on their current poll performance, to win the forthcoming regional election in Lower Saxony, and thus take a blocking majority in the Bundesrat) Kohl wavered on *Ostpolitik*, bringing down the wrath of his Foreign Minister, the enormously popular Hans-Dietrich Genscher and the only SDP figure of any standing—and nearly broke up the coalition. In this context, Kohl's assault on the East German elections, in support of a lash-up of right-wing parties including some erstwhile Honecker collaborators, seemed a thoroughly welcome diversion. He could recover what seemed the hopeless fortunes of the East CDU and stop the eastward expansion of the CSU. But, never a man to do things by halves, Kohl has now put the CDU on the line, east and west.

The left should draw breath; the obsession with being "one people" was beginning to divert socialist attention, inside and outside Germany, from paradigms of a federalised Europe to debates about the national question, which could only complicate the business of economic and social reconstruction.

The losers from the FDR economic miracle drive 1970s Opels from decaying family farms

If the German national—as opposed to regional—establishment isn't up to this task, as I think circumstances will prove, then—God and the SDP's presidential candidate Oskar Lafontaine, willing—its regionalists and Europeans should get their chance. ●

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Nostalgia for the future

As Hungary goes to the polls, Agnes Heller, her country's most famous exile, returns home to look to the future and bury the past

After years of political unemployment, police harassment and utter isolation, I finally succeeded in leaving Hungary with a few friends in 1977. I was relieved of a nightmare; yet my heart was heavy with despair and grief. The farewell seemed to be final. The regime stood firm and I believed that it would remain so during my lifetime.

I knew perfectly well that the illegitimate east European communist regimes would collapse the moment the Soviet leaders ceased backing them, and I repeatedly expressed this conviction in writing, challenging prevailing western opinion. But what seemed—short of a miracle—impossible to me was the radical change in Soviet politics. Once this miracle happened, everything else also happened as expected. Yet the wounds of long historical experiences heal slowly. Even now, I feel occasional fits of anxiety that the Soviets might still have second thoughts about letting us free. And I am sure that many Hungarians, Poles, Czechs and Germans feel likewise.

By chance, I happened to be in Hungary at the time of the party conference when Janos Kadar was dismissed from his position of first secretary in May 1988. Kadar's speech on the first day was threatening. If his policies had been implemented, it would have led to the mass arrest of the dissidents, including my daughter. But Kadar was demoted. The country was relieved; there was a premonition of the beginning of a new era in the air. And yet, the political imagination of those in power after him was not stretched further than a kind of "reformist" communism. Leaving the country, my husband and I were searched by the Hungarian secret police at the Austrian border. Their habits, too, died slowly.

When we came back half a year later, Hungary was already in a state of self-transformation. We have been back three times since—and each time, we found a different country. Scepticism gave way not to hope, but to active involvement. Our group, the "Budapest School", has been "rehabilitated". We were offered the opportunity to return. We now write for Hungarian newspapers and talk on radio and television.

I could not go back for the ceremonial reburial of the almost 300 victims of the 1956 revolution—executed after mock trials and shovelled into an anonymous grave in a corner of the public cemetery of Budapest, together with animals used for medical experiments. The exhumed bodies were identified and the families pressed for a proper burial. In June 1989, the communist leaders were still in firm control. They hesitated whether or not to allow the funeral. But then the day of the funeral became the day of wrath. A crowd of 200,000 gathered. When the day ended, at least some of those in power were of two minds. They no longer knew whether they belonged to those who executed Prime Minister Imre Nagy and other members of his government, or to those who had been executed.

The overwhelming majority of youngsters buried in Lot No 301 came from the working class

I later undertook a pilgrimage to the cemetery. The executed have been reburied in the same Lot No. 301; but now, wreaths, flowers, candles and pebbles have been placed on stones which finally have names on them. Imre Nagy, the last legitimate prime minister of Hungary until now, was not buried in the row reserved for his government. His grave has been placed amid the "ordinary" victims. I walked along the graves—many women, many very young men. Peter Mansfeld was 18 years of age when he was executed. He was 15 during the uprising in which he fought as an armed insurgent. Secret police officers arrested him just before he came of age; they had, indeed, no vestiges of "cheap petty bourgeois humanism" in them.

Agnes Heller is one of the world's leading philosophers. She and her husband, Ferenc Feher, both members of the Lukacsian "Budapest School", were exiled from Hungary in 1977. Now Professor of Philosophy at the New School, New York, she has engaged in the new Hungarian politics on frequent visits home

Despite all this, there is very little hatred now; the desire for revenge has been subdued. The dead have been buried, the innocent victims rehabilitated, the false convictions annulled. The depth of the terror has been unearthed. The present owes to the past the recognition of its suffering, it owes justice to the victims. Everything else pertains to the future alone. This is the psychological atmosphere which you feel in the air.

The transition is very smooth; too smooth for some. In Budapest not much politics is going on in the streets. Huge crowds only gather on occasions that are somehow related to 1956. At the same time, Hungary has begun to behave as if it were already a minor western democracy. It conducts an independent foreign policy within "geopolitical limits". The media are entirely free and, on the whole, responsible. People act as if "by nature" they were central Europeans and already members of the European Community. When I arrived at Vienna airport, my daughter waited there to drive me home. Vienna is a "natural" place to go, at least for the middle classes and for the inhabitants of western Hungary.

During my stay, the referendum took place. Members of the Alliance of Free Democrats (a party with a long oppositional *samizdat* tradition), the very ones who had taken the initiative for the referendum, were gloomy. They expected a 40 per cent turnout and bad results. All the more so since the populist Hungarian Democratic Forum decided to boycott the referendum. The pessimists proved entirely wrong. The turnout was high, and the answers highly responsible. The boycott alienated many members from the populist party. Apparently, people do want to participate in politics, but they will decide when and how.

The rejection of the old regime was unanimous. But why then has the whole process been so smooth and "organic"? Why is there so little excitement? One explanation is the gloomy state of the economy, the destruction of the country's infrastructure, the widespread poverty. But as a rule, people are more, not less, rebellious amid grave poverty and in times

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Erich Lessing/Magnum

Budapest 1956: Hungary had its street-fighting, revolutionary councils—and suffering. The present revolution need only remember not repeat the earlier one

of economic depression. There is never one good single explanation, but economic ruin and poverty certainly seem to me the wrong ones.

In the cemetery, I got the impression that the revolution of 1956 is not a memory from a remote past. The revolution of 1956 is present, for it is regarded as the act of foundation; and as such it will be forever present. Since the system was abolished then, the present now treads in the footsteps of 1956. This also means that our period of uprising, street-fighting, pulling down statues of tyrants and forming revolutionary councils is over. We have done our bit, now let us see the results.

The revolution of 1989-90 is unlike the revolution of 1956, because the symbolic gestures have already been acted out. They need not be repeated, only remembered. Moreover, although 1956 and 1989 are politically coeval, psychologically and socially they are certainly not. The Kadar period was the age of retarded action on the political level, but it still changed both the psychological attitude and the sociological map of the country.

Semprun de Maura spoke about the "syphilitical development" of Spain under Franco, a development which, though morbid, still provided the young democracy with new conditions. Something similar happened under the Kadar regime. Although Kadarism, unlike the Franco regime, resulted in economic disaster, the country became more urban and attitudes more modern in its last ten years. The experiments with economic reforms failed, but they had taken place; they have made men and women think about the know-how of an efficient economy.

If oppression is rational, it allows for a certain kind of independent thinking. The dedicated editors of Hungarian *samizdat* publications worked under constant threat, but they survived. They have exercised considerable influence on people's minds. Those influenced by them never would have dared to admit this during bad times, but they do now. Significantly, many party members, especially party intellectuals, drew inspiration from the *samizdat*; this is how they became prepared to concede the failure of their own enterprise. When the chips were down, before and during the party congress of October 1989, the reform-wing translated this lesson into the political action of self-dissolution.

During my visits to Hungary, I have met old school friends, many of them party members. I witnessed their dissatisfaction with their own regime grow stronger and louder. They began to assimilate ideas or slogans they had regarded as "counter-revolutionary" just a few years earlier. Finally they left their own communism behind, to arrive at the acceptance of multi-party democracy as the only political option.

In 1956, the working class was active. Workers' councils emerged almost everywhere on the spot. Nothing like this happens now. The Kadar regime was an establishment of the middle classes. The party elite occupied the position of an upper middle class in it. The "people" had no active role for too long. Our only knowledge of the minds of the workers, and of "the people" in general, is encapsulated in the results of the referendum. The proverbial "men in the street" must be great sceptics. For ultimately they were oppressed and ruthlessly exploited by a rule which never ceased to refer to them, "the proletariat", as the source of power of the rulers. We should also keep in mind that the overwhelming majority of the youngsters buried in Lot No. 301 came from the working class. Apart from the outburst of rage, political self-emancipation takes time.

The election for the parliament represents the end of an old era and the beginning of a new one. In this act of foundation, everything is open. In this moment, what kind of constitution Hungary will have, what kind of a nation it will be, depends on the actors, on their resolution, wisdom and endurance.

The 20th century started with the disaster of world war one. The results of that war were painful for the Hungarian nation. From this time onwards bad decisions, catastrophes—self-inflicted or caused by others—marked the way of Hungarian history. Now the chance to terminate this century is open. Hungary, like all the nations of central and eastern Europe, can turn a new page, not necessarily one which is lily-white, but at least one on which the story recounted will be the doing of the men and women of this unhappy region and not dictated by an alien will. ●

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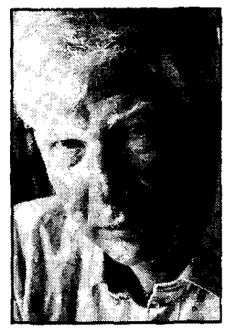
POLITICAL COLUMN

From the front

You need comparable populist appeal to challenge Thatcher—Heseltine is the man



R W Johnson

The crisis over the Tory leadership has, with a striking speed and completeness, resolved itself into a Thatcher-Heseltine confrontation. Such a confrontation would have been unthinkable in the days of Churchill, Eden or Macmillan. And the Tories never used to polarise between just two candidates in this way—indeed the leadership front-runner almost always lost out to a Third or Fourth Man. Such was the fate of Rab Butler in 1957 and again in 1963, of Reggie Maudling in 1965, and Willie Whitelaw in 1975. But if Maggie survives now it will be quite largely because the Tories do not feel free, as they did in 1975, to boot out an old leader in favour of a still-unknown alternative. This time everyone knows, for good or ill, that There Is No Alternative to... Heseltine.

The Tories set out on the road to the present situation in 1965 when the power of leadership selection was taken away from a small, closed circle of notables and bestowed upon Tory MPs at large. The results of this change were complex and are still unfolding. The MPs elected first Heath and then Thatcher—neither of whom would have had any chance of selection had the old magic circle still held sway. These new leaders were well aware of this—were aware, indeed, that many Tory grandees and even many backbenchers regarded them as social inferiors. Neither had been to the right (private) sort of school, after all, while their four postwar predecessors had consisted of one Harrovian and three Etonians.

This more or less disqualified Heath and Thatcher from exercising authority in the approved patrician style. They were both competitive, state-school meritocrats. A lofty air of lordly assumption was not their personal style; nor would it have worked had they attempted to affect it (one doubts the thought occurred). Churchill, Eden, Macmillan and Home had, moreover, enjoyed the natural authority of age as well as class. Heath and Thatcher were decisively younger, career politicians in for the long haul. Heath was leader as long as Eden, Macmillan and Home all put together (and was hardly ready to go even then), while Thatcher has been leader even longer and is even more famously reluctant to go.

In fact, the style both Heath and Thatcher adopted was an extremely tough and domineering one, a sort of brutal managerialism. They ruled their colleagues as much as led them. In one sense they could afford this in a way the old patricians—lacking the surety of democratic election—could not. But it was also the case that this was simply what they took leadership to be, and they supposed that they owed their election to their leadership qualities rather than to their (somewhat meagre) personal popularity: so best to lead from the front. There is, in any case, no species quite so given to egomanic display as the fully completed meritocrat—as witness Harold Wilson's dreadful boasting and Thatcher's ludicrous "We are a grandmother, I am a government" style. Those who wish can see a sinister Ceaucescu-ism in this, but the lowly truth is that Toad of Toad Hall is the closer analogy.

Heseltine can play the ultimate presidential card: "With me you can win; with her you won't"

But there was an element of personal and political insecurity behind this style too, for they knew that what the backbenchers had bestowed they could also take away. Heath had seen Home brutally drummed out and Thatcher has had the dread example of Heath ever before her. She has always been convinced that her leadership of the party could not survive an election defeat.

In this way a great contradiction grew within the new type of Tory leadership: on the one hand, an urge to a quite overweening style of authority; on the other, a new vulnerability, a real insecurity. Thatcher's way of surmounting this contradiction has been an implicit appeal to the Tory faithful, over the heads of Tory MPs. The implied threat to dissident Tory MPs is: try to get rid of me and I'll kick and scream and fight—and my supporters will rise up in wrath against you. On Sunday, in barely coded language, Mrs Thatcher made exactly that appeal via the *Sunday Express*. A careful choice, no doubt: this is a battle in which the required reading is the *Times*, *Telegraph*, *Mail*, and *Express*.

This building of such directly personal support represents a further stage in the creeping presidentialisation of British politics. The developing logic of this process implies that Mrs Thatcher can be seriously challenged only by someone who enjoys comparable populist appeal both at conference and at voter level—that is, by a presidential contender. The first example of such a challenge was that by Enoch Powell, who not only frequently headed Heath in the polls but won 30 per cent of the Tory conference vote against the leadership in 1972 over the Ugandan Asian issue.

The too easily forgotten presidential contender with the same capability today is not Heseltine, but Tebbit. Already Tebbit has more MPs lining up behind him on the Hong Kong immigration issue than Heseltine can point to, and Tebbit has a relationship with the Tory conference which is fully the equal of his or Thatcher's. If Powell could achieve what he did over just 50,000 Ugandan Asians, Tebbit plus 230,000 Hong Kong Asians could probably destroy Thatcher altogether. The sheer menace of this factor should not be under-estimated—though were Tebbit to lead such a charge it would, like Powell's, be self-destructive.

Heseltine's presidential challenge is at once simpler and more advanced. He is a man who, long ago and instinctively, took the presidentialist path—working to build a special and emotional relationship with the Tory conference and party branches everywhere. Partly, no doubt, he did this because he realised that he could never become leader any other way, but it also came naturally to his temperament. And now he is able to play the ultimate presidential card: "With me you can win, with her you won't"—the NMR/*Independent on Sunday* poll shows a 15 per cent Heseltine advantage over Thatcher.

None of which means that Heseltine is certain to win or even to run—indeed, he cannot mount a formal challenge to Thatcher until the autumn when the annual re-election of the Tory leader falls due. A great deal can happen between now and then, but for the Tories the main thing is that the resulting "campaign" period is too agonisingly long. The pressure will build for Thatcher to resolve the matter some way before that. If she gets through to the summer recess she may well be safe—which means we are in for an interesting spring.

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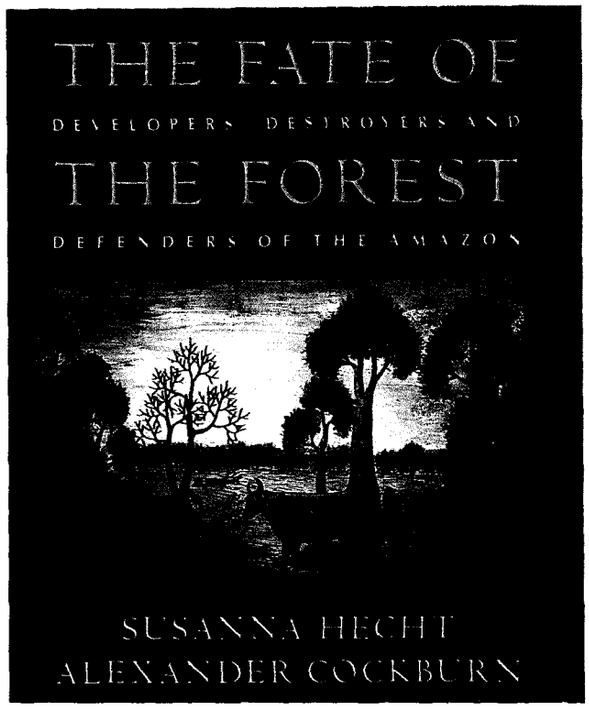

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Emergency Exit

Sixteen out of 17 parents wanted to keep it, four out of five headteachers agreed. Claire Sanders talked to three heads about the death of ILEA

In ten days, on April Fool's Day, the Inner London Education Authority will disappear. It will be mourned by the majority of London parents. In a ballot overseen by the Electoral Reform Society, 16 out of 17 parents wanted their schools to stay under ILEA control. In another survey 80 per cent of headteachers said that educational standards in London would decline after abolition; for the first time in 120 years, London's 942 schools, plus special schools, colleges, institutes and youth centres, will be the responsibility of 13 borough councils rather than a single body.

As the Conservative Education Association admitted in 1988, ILEA is going as a result of "political manoeuvring by MPs with no great interest (or knowledge) in education". Labour-dominated, it had to fight off repeated attacks from the Conservative government throughout the 1980s. But each time the government drew back from total abolition on the grounds that this would mean handing over schools to loony-left councils like Hackney and Lambeth. Michael Heseltine and Norman Tebbit finally ensured its demise by hijacking the 1988 Education Reform Act and getting last-minute amendments abolishing it inserted.

Stuart Maclure, editor of the *Times Education Supplement* for 20 years, believes that: "Whatever the weaknesses of ILEA in its later years—years when the difficulties it faced were greater than ever before—the manner in which it was destroyed was disgraceful." The three headteachers interviewed opposite, who have very different political views and have reacted to ILEA in totally contrasting ways, would all endorse that view.

That ILEA had its weaknesses is not in doubt. From the merciless coverage it received at the hands of certain tabloids, you could be forgiven for thinking that its anti-racist and anti-sexist policies were what most angered the right. But it's not so simple as that. Graeme Walker, head of Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Boys School, a voluntary-aided school in Lewisham which plans to become a City Technology College, thinks "their policies on gender and race were absolutely right". He points out that although the approach was often "bullish, sometimes you have to be firm if you want to change entrenched ideas". By contrast, Ted Smith, a lifelong Labour Party member and a radical head of Hampstead School in the 1970s, resigned within two years of the left gaining control of ILEA in 1981. "They instituted a policy of dogmatism and divisiveness on race and sex—if you weren't for them you were against them."

ILEA was also criticised for overspending and poor exam results in secondary schools. Ironically, total spending on bureaucracy is set to increase enormously when the boroughs take over, according to the latest research being done at County Hall. It is true that each inner London pupil had £2,870 spent on it when the national average was £1,961. But then ILEA faced areas of great need. By 1989 the number of pupils in ILEA whose home language was not English was 25 per cent; half of its pupils qualified for free school meals in 1987; over a fifth of the parents of its pupils were unemployed. Joan O'Pray, head of Sheringdale Primary School in Wandsworth, argues: "Other authorities should try and emulate ILEA, money spent on a child's education is never wasted." In 1985, ILEA was rate-capped and became the only education authority in the country which ceased to receive any government grant.

That some ILEA schools underperformed is quite clear—although it was ILEA's own inspectorate which invariably brought these faults to light. But as ILEA's abolition was debated, the Department of Education and Science agreed with ILEA's own interpretation of their exam results and concluded: "When statistically adjusted for socio-economic factors, ILEA results in public examinations appear to come up to standard."

Where ILEA came in for special praise was its provision of adult education; its special needs resources and its primary schools. Joan O'Pray will miss ILEA (her new boss is Wandsworth, an avowedly Thatcherite authority): especially "the resources, both bodies and money, that I could call on to meet the needs of every child in this school. It was an innovatory and supportive authority to work for."

Colin Ward talks about his memories of County Hall. Fringe Benefits, page 27.

John Morris

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Keith Waldegrave

Graeme Walker, head, Haberdashers' Aske's, Hatcham Boys School

The boys (aged from 11 to 18) at Hatcham Boys School line up in the playground in the mornings for inspection and the school captain reports to the head if there are any problems. The uniform is strictly enforced, the masters wear gowns and are addressed as Sir.

Graeme Walker has some interesting views on ILEA. He came to Hatcham from another ILEA school which "had a reputation as one of the worst in London. I had been educated in a private school and taught at Marlbrough, but I wanted to experience more of the world."

He deeply regrets the loss of ILEA: "After all, it gave me a job." He has tried to institute their sex and race policies, with which he fully agrees. "We had an ethnic minorities committee. Recently we changed it to an equal opportunities committee. We try and ensure that none of our pupils suffers from racism, that their home cultures are respected."

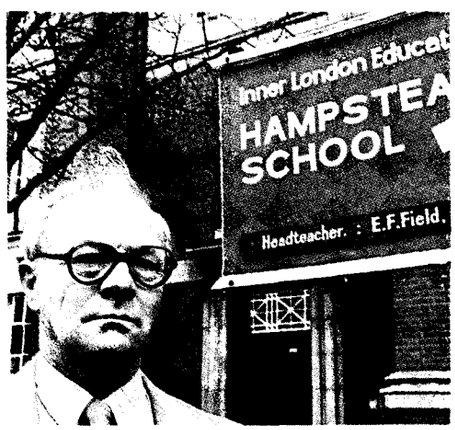
The policies on gender are harder to enforce in an all-boys school. "When I came there were no women teachers, now there are ten. I feel they act as good role models for the boys."

Walker has only recently felt able to make a statement in assembly on equal opportunities for those of a different sexual orientation. "I had to move slowly on that as I had to carry people with me—some of my staff, when I first came here, had been teaching longer than my wife had been alive."

One of the criticisms he would level at ILEA is that it tried to move too fast in certain areas. He feels it was necessary to be firm, but "it didn't always carry white working-class parents with it and that was a big mistake". He also had the feeling of being watched over the past ten years: "I felt there was a certain party line that had to be followed, and there was clearly tension in ILEA between officers and members.

"The only committee ILEA ever asked me to sit on was one for children with marked aptitudes. I was pleased that Frances Morrell (head of ILEA from 1983 to 1987) set that up, but at one time I felt that academic standards almost became a dirty word."

It saddens him that ILEA has been so misrepresented in right-wing tabloids, but feels that the confrontational attitude of the authority hastened its demise. "It must have been political ineptness—ILEA had so many strengths."



Ted Field, ex-head, Hampstead School

"I still have angry arguments with them in my head when I'm working in the allotment," says Ted Field. He retired in 1983, after finding the post-1981 leadership at ILEA and his own board of governors "impossible".

Hampstead School was noted as progressive and successful under his headship in the 1970s: "I was the first to abolish the school uniform." Passionately committed to comprehensive schools, he nevertheless felt that, under Frances Morrell whom he refers to as Madam Mao, ILEA became a dogmatic and interventionist authority.

Echoing Graeme Walker, he says he also felt watched "all the time as if I was a clerk with someone looking over my shoulder". But while Walker's positive attitude to ILEA enabled him to shrug off these difficulties, Field found it increasingly onerous.

"For me the golden days of ILEA were between 1976 and 1981. That was after the teachers had had their major pay rise, and my staffing problems were eased. When I first came to Hampstead, an ILEA officer visited me and said: 'You'll know if you are doing alright, you won't see me again.' And that was how it worked. ILEA was a model of how it should be done—it was light years ahead."

After 1981, Field witnessed a changed attitude in the Labour Party members on his board of govenors. "I felt they were there to disapprove of the school rather than support it... They were very thrusting." He felt that certain members thought more of the party line back at County Hall than of the school. The situation was made more difficult as ILEA began to reorganise and close down schools in the face of falling rolls.

The final straw came after the governors voted to censure him on the way he had, in their view, mishandled a new appointment to the staff. "One Labour governor came up to me afterwards and said she agreed with me, but she'd had to vote with the others because of her standing in the party."

Despite these complaints, he still describes the loss of ILEA as "the worst thing for the London education service since the blitz".

Primary

Joan O'Pray, head, Sheringdale Primary

Sheringdale Primary School is in a leafy prosperous part of Wandsworth, but Joan O'Pray is keen to attract pupils from nearby housing estates. "I want a good mix in this school."

Originally from Cumbria, she and her children "have all worked [their] way through ILEA". Like Graeme Walker, she makes a point of knowing every child by name. She has no quibbles with ILEA's anti-sexist and anti-racist directives: "As a young teacher who was told not to wear trousers to school, I welcomed them." She thinks that heads who felt that ILEA intervened too much were wrong. "You constantly have to deal with outside initiatives, from central and local government. Your job is to implement them in the best way."

Her school is unusual in that there are more girls than boys. "This means the girls are less easily dominated. We're lucky as we have some very confident and assertive girls who act as role models." Although the school does not have a substantial black intake, she does have some Afro-Caribbean and Asian children "as well as numerous children from a whole range of countries, Turkey, Denmark, France..." Some have special language teaching and she makes sure that there is a positive attitude to different cultures: "If kids make racist jokes I explain to them that they are offending people, and I find that most of them respond well to that."

However, she feels that ILEA stressed race at the expense of class: "They were courageous, but class is as important a determinant of a child's future as its colour and that wasn't recognised until too late."

She is also strict about discipline—one of the bugbears of ILEA's critics. "There is no fighting and hitting allowed in the school at all, although I do encourage children to look after themselves. I can't be there all the time. If that means hitting back once then I'll accept that."

She has found ILEA a very supportive authority and will miss its many resources. "Already Wandsworth has made the mistake of closing the planetarium down the road. We could have shared that resource with other boroughs." And she is worried that the boroughs will not be as innovatory: "ILEA's primary language records were taken by the national curriculum council as models of good practice." Wandsworth will be a very different type of authority: "It was so critical of ILEA that parents now expect an awful lot."

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Grey power

As the elderly population expands, Nick Fielding charts their first political victories

Amidst all its other woes the government is now facing a major crisis over homes for the elderly. While accepting the arguments in favour of community care, ministers have tried to pare the funds to implement it.

The government suffered its first defeat in a Commons vote in four years last week when 32 Tory rebels voted with the opposition and supported an opposition clause to the NHS and Community Care Bill which would have required the government to make up the difference between social security payments and the cost of places in private and voluntary homes for the elderly.

Although MPs then voted not to include the clause in the bill, the initial vote was a warning to the government that feelings are running high. The Tory-dominated Social Services Select Committee has already issued two reports this year strongly critical of government policy and more are expected. It has recommended that the Secretary of State for Social Security should immediately commission an independent investigation into the costs of residential care.

But the Commons is not the only focus of discontent. Under the terms of the new bill, local authority old people's homes become an increasingly unattractive option. The government, considering that local councils should divest themselves of their own homes and become enablers rather than providers of care, has thoughtfully provided local authorities with the financial incentives to change their role.

Bob Bird Photographs

Leading the way on the Wirral—campaign to stop council old people's homes from being sold off

As a result, many councils are trying to establish housing trusts to run their homes, or are selling them to housing associations or private care associations. At least a dozen authorities—including Bradford, Kent, Cambridgeshire, Devon, Wirral and Cheshire—have put some or all of their homes on the market.

Under the terms of the new bill, people admitted by the social services into private residential care after April 1991 will be eligible for the same level of social security benefits as people living at home, namely income support and housing benefit. But the government is proposing to replace the present system of income support board-and-lodgings payments

WELFARE WATCH

A yawning gap

The government's defeat in the Commons on the issue of income support for elderly people in residential and nursing homes is the latest manifestation of a long-standing problem: should public funds meet the costs of care in private establishments which set their own prices and standards? It is ironic that it should have occurred in the context of the Community Care Bill which offers hope of a long-term solution.

Local authorities are to have financial responsibility for those entering homes from April 1991 on, but the government proposes to keep the present system of income support for the 200,000 existing residents. Concern about their fate led to last week's Tory revolt.

Income support board-and-lodging payments are limited to £150 a week (from next month) for old people's homes and £200 for nursing homes, with higher limits for homes catering for special needs and an extra £23 in Greater London. Those limits are far too low for many homes—not just profit-making private homes but charitable and voluntary homes which need to cover costs.

Nearly half the claimants concerned are paying charges above the limits. The gap is filled by relatives, often themselves pensioners, by charities or by claimants giving up their £10 pocket money. But there are also reports of residents on income support being evicted or put on an inferior diet.

The fear is that things could get worse after April 1991. The numbers could turn out to be far more than 200,000, since it will pay local authorities to push people into homes before then so that the DSS will continue to foot their bills. And the DSS will have an incentive to hold its limits down, since in due course the money spent on income support payments will be transferred to the local authorities.

The new clause which the Commons nearly adopted (it failed on a second vote, to the embarrassment of the Labour whips) would have required the DSS to pay the full charge unless an adjudication officer (AO) decided it was unreasonable. The proposal will be debated again at the report stage of the social security bill next week.

The DSS objection is that AOs are not qualified to judge what is reasonable. It is true, as MPs on both sides pointed out, that the charges negotiated by local authorities for new residents will eventually provide a standard for AOs to follow. But it will take time for authorities to establish reliable guidelines.

What is reaully needed is a substantial increase in the income support limits. An immediate increase could have undesirable consequences, by adding to the pressure to get old people into residential care before next April. Once April comes, however, the risk will cease, since the increased limits will only apply to the existing residents.

Tony Lynes

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for people in residential care—a system which *includes* a care element—administered by the DSS. In future, local authorities will meet all costs of private residential care. The individual will be means-tested and in addition required to hand over any benefits which they are receiving to the local authority. The actual *care* of those requiring public assistance will be met by government grant to the local authority based on the care element of the income support system under the old rules.

The only problem is that councils will receive no such help with elderly people they place in their own publicly funded homes. As with private and voluntary homes, local councils can charge where residents can afford to pay but thereafter the authority must make up any shortfall itself. This will continue after 1991.

In the Wirral this resulted in a major campaign against the hung council which has been forced to withdraw most of its proposals. A council report found that the lowest wages were paid in private residential homes, while staff training was minimal and seldom led to formal qualifications. A consultation by social services found that three-quarters of residents and their relatives were against transfer.

Besides venting its ideological antagonism against in-house provision, the government has put forward the new scheme because the old one has the perverse consequence of encouraging local authorities to put people into residential homes, where they are supported by the DSS, rather than spend their own scarce resources on home helps, meals on wheels and other forms of domicilary care. The number of people claiming income support in residential care and nursing homes rose from 12,000 in December 1979 (at a cost of £18 million) to 147,000 by December 1988. The estimated costs of such care is now over £1 billion a year. The government hopes that when local councils are in charge of community care budgets, they will seek as cost-effective a deal as possible. Given the massive expected demand for care, plus the growing numbers of elderly people, keeping people in their own homes will be cheaper than putting them in residential care.

Evidence presented to the Select Committee indicates that these huge sums are failing the people they are meant to serve. In many areas the shortfall between benefits and charges is about £30 a week. Age Concern say that 42 per cent of claimants in residential homes need to find additional help, much of it from charities. The BEN Motor and Allied Trades Benevolent Fund says it had a shortfall in income of £633,000 in 1989, while a survey by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in 1988 found that 59 per cent of the 206 homes surveyed had a funding deficit totalling over £1.4 million. A survey by Counsel and Care for the Elderly showed that only seven out of 132 private and voluntary nursing homes and one third of residential homes in the London area had fees as low as income support levels.

The Tory revolt in the Commons was in support of just these people. There are eight million elderly voters in Britain. In the past they have been a bedrock of support for the Tories. Grey power is on the move.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Too many chiefs

Colin Ward

Going to County Hall last week I realised that it must be just like this in East Germany: people drifting off every Friday and not coming back. As I walked through just a few of the 11 miles of corridor I saw hand-written notices on doors with messages like "Alan Palmer has left. All post and enquiries re Strategic Policy to Room 219."

I spent half a lifetime getting used to that building. I was endlessly there in the fifties, trying to cope with the planners and the administrators of the London Building Acts and Byelaws. In those days we called the place The Morgue or The Kremlin. This wasn't a political jibe. It just referred to the vast hierarchical bureaucracy exercising every last inch of power at all levels. Sometimes I would find myself on the Members' floor with its oak panelling, and come across worthy people on the housing committee struggling with the procedural machine. In the late sixties, as a technical college teacher, I was actually on the payroll.

Like every other ex-Londoner I grew up with equivocal feelings about the London County Council, later transformed into the Greater London Council. I could draw a graph to show how, just in the field of architecture, the history of the LCC/GLC consisted of bright moments of innovation followed by formalistic troughs, from the 1980s on. The same was true in planning. I was there in the TV studio when the one-time chief strategic planner, Dr David Eversley, resigned. "What have you achieved?" the interviewer asked him. "Nothing", he replied. "And what have you learned?". He answered: "Humility."

As to housing, Tony Judge, a life-long socialist, summed up his experience as chair of the GLC Housing Management Committee with the words: "The impression, often confirmed as accurate on deeper examination, is of a vast bureaucracy concerned more with self-perpetuation than with either efficiency or humanity."

Rather than blame anyone it is more sensible to recognise that in our kind of centralised state, a national government cannot tolerate the existence of a city government, with a population bigger than that of many nation states, just across the river from Westminster.

A century ago, no sooner had the central government tidied up London by setting up the LCC than it took fright and established the metropolitan boroughs as countervailing powers, thus ensuring continual rivalry between them. In the 1960s, a Conservative government, hoping to break up the LCC, transformed it into the GLC with the Inner London Education Authority taking over education in the old LCC area. At the same time it forced amalgamations among the old boroughs.

The new bodies in County Hall fulfilled Parkinson's Law to the letter. As the GLC's responsibilities declined so its establishment increased. As the schools and the school population of inner London fell, so the ILEA staff multiplied. Given the protagonists and given the life-and-death powers of central government over local authorities which we take for granted but which is unthinkable in many parts of the world, we were moving into some kind of *Götterdammerung*. Even I, as an irresponsible outsider, published an article in February 1974 which ended with the question "Can the GLC survive to 1984?"

If the future was obvious to me it should have been clear to the clever folk running London. The reason why I took a trip down Memory Lane to County Hall last week was for a meeting set up by Bob Caterall of the Centre for Urban Educational Studies under the title *London 2000: Education Strategies for the Whole Community*. He says that "the abolition of the ILEA is a symbolic defeat for the cross-London struggle for quality and equality in education", but he sees the transfer of education to the boroughs as "an opportunity for radical improvement in accessibility and delivery".

Apart from the question of who is going to finance non-school education, he wants a federation of interest groups for an Inner London Education *Alliance*. I would like the boroughs to federate under such a title just to make facilities available to all. Some of the impressive new chief education officers were there to assure me that the crossing of borough boundaries by children and students was not an issue. They already had reciprocal agreements. Committee members already have ILEAC, a joint committee of politicans, and out of self-interest the CEOs will join forces.

Boundaries aren't the issue. Nor is the future of the bureaucracy. The key question is to make it worthwhile for teachers, some of whom are not sure who is going to give them a paycheck at the end of April, to be in inner London classrooms. The tragedy of that vast neo-Baroque pile on the South Bank is that it was always full of Chiefs confident that the Indians would be around forever, down at the chalk face.

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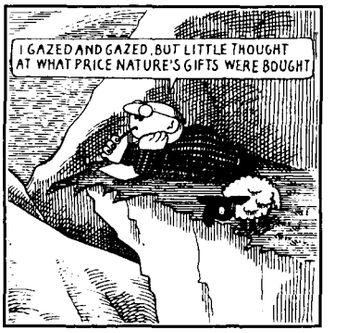
A BANC report by John Bowers, Leeds University



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Danger! Men at work

Work can maim you for life. Barbara Miller reports on three projects fighting for reform

Discovering whether a workplace is harming workers' health can be an uphill struggle. The government's Health and Safety Executive is overstretched, its occupational nursing staff cut by half, and can only respond to a small proportion of the complaints it receives. Its medical arm, the Employment Medical Advisory Service, is equally swamped. Few workplaces have any reliable system for investigating the effects of hazardous environments and processes on their workers' health.

Yet a recent survey showed that a staggering 44 per cent of patients visiting their GPs had suffered or were suffering from work-related ill health and at least 70,000 workers develop work-related diseases every year.

But occupational health projects, working alongside family doctors, have been slow to develop. The first started in Sheffield more than 12 years ago, and even today there are only three up and running.

The Sheffield project, launched by a group of health and safety campaigners and the local trades union safety committee in the wake of the Health and Safety at Work Act, began in the city's working men's club. "We would set up in a back room at the club and a steady stream of people would come to us for advice every week," says Simon Pickvance, one of the project's founder members.

Initially, the work was carried out voluntarily, until one enlightened GP suggested running the scheme in his practice, with charity funding. Eighteen months later the Family Practitioner Committee (FPC) agreed that the sessions could be funded through the ancillary staffs scheme, paying project workers in the same way as GP receptionists are paid. Since then, project workers operating in pairs, one with a scientific and technical background, the other a trade unionist, have held regular sessions in GP waiting rooms, spending time with patients while they wait for their appointment.

Eight Sheffield practices are involved in the scheme and project workers spend around five hours in each practice every week. "We interview patients about their work history," says project worker Mick Firth. "We ask them what jobs they are doing and have done in the past ten years, what hazards they may have been exposed to and what health problems they have experienced."

Notes of each patient's interviews are kept with the usual medical records by the GP but records are also kept by the project team so they can put together a comprehensive occupational health database for the city. The records show that many thousands of workers suffer injury or disease as a result of their work,

though very few received the state benefits or compensation to which they are entitled until they received advice from the project workers.

A report by the project last year shows that three out of five steel workers suffer from chest problems and are twice as likely to die from chest disease as other manual workers. The Iron and Steel Trades Confederation is now using the findings to have chronic bronchitis, emphysema and asthma in steel workers recognised as prescribed industrial diseases so thay they can apply for disablement benefit.

Industrial deafness is also a problem in the traditional Sheffield industries and project workers use portable audiometers to carry out hearing tests in the surgery sessions. "We have tested over 1,500 people, referring 1,382 of them for compensation," says Firth. "They received around £1,700 each—over £2 million in total—which they would not have got if they had not been able to have the hearing test."

"We tested over 1,500 people, referring 1,382 for compensation. They received over £2 million in total"

Workers at the project insist, however, that they are not a substitute for trades unions. Carol Duerden, a project worker with Bradford Occupational Health Project, which started in January 1989, points out that 90 per cent of that city's workplaces are small, with fewer than 50 employees, little union membership, and consequently, no organisation to fight for workplace health and safety improvements.

Both projects are convinced that working within the family doctor arrangements at the primary care level is essential. "GPs we work with say that they are much more aware of people's occupations as a source of ill health than they were before," adds Duerden.

The Bradford project has interviewed about 1,300 patients in seven GP surgeries during its first year and is now building up a picture of the city's occupational health. "Low back pain and stress are two of the most common problems which now cross the occupational spectrum affecting both white collar and blue collar workers," Duerden points out.

Simon Pickvance agrees. He reckons tackling stress will be one of the labour movement's priorities over the next 20 years. "Some face the stress of poverty, or of insecure jobs, temporary contracts, compulsory overtime, understaffing, piecework and unemployment. All these take a toll on workers' health."

The latest occupational health project to start up, in the London Borough of Camden, also expects stress, along with repetitive strain injuries, accidents in catering, back pain caused by lifting, and headaches, eyestrain and fatigue caused by VDU work to figure high on its list.

This project, which started at the beginning of March, is funded by the Family Practitioner Committee with further finance administered by the local health authority, local authority and FPC, for three years.

London GP Dr Gene Feder, a member of the project's management committee, says this initiative, while modelled on Sheffield, is also trying to build an evaluation element to its processes and outcomes. "If these projects are going to be promoted it is important to prove they are effective," he says. "We want to be able to look at how many interventions the occupational health workers have made, what changes have been achieved in the workplaces and whether compensation and better treatment have resulted."

The Camden project is starting in three "typical inner city practices with keen GPs". Dr Feder, although not in favour of the new contracts for GPs, says that they may well encourage more GPs to become involved with occupational health as they will get paid for taking on more health promotion work.

All three projects are also very much concerned with the occupational health problems suffered by ethnic minority workers. They are far more likely to work in the more noisy, dirty and unskilled jobs throughout their working life. "In the steel industry throughout the world and in foundries and melting shops you will find black workers," says Pickvance.

Two years work with the Yemeni and Somali community organisations in Sheffield resulted in compensation settlements of over £1 million, while in Bradford the project is carrying out hearing tests to help with compensation claims for Bangladeshi and Polish populations, both of which have severe problems with industrial deafness.

"We are looking at occupational health in a totally different way," says Duerden. "The 20 minutes we spend with patients in the waiting room might be the only time in their lives they talk about it—yet they are in the best position to identify what is happening to them at work. It's just that no-one has ever before asked the people doing the jobs what the problems are."

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Society Today is *NSS*'s term-time page for sociology students

Mother love

Pat McNeill on our ambivalent attitude to mothers and mothering

Judy Stevens

Sunday 25 March is Mothers Day. Family members will have been encouraged to buy cards, flowers and presents to mark the occasion. In some households the day will be conspicuous for the more or less competent attempts by the rest of the family, especially perhaps the male members, to do the domestic tasks that mother normally does. For one day, or at least for part of it, the size of the domestic role and the responsibilities of motherhood will be acknowledged. It will be a rare household in which this recognition will last into Monday morning, even when the mother concerned goes out to her other job.

There is nothing like the issue of mothers taking paid employment outside the home to put into focus our society's ambivalent, inconsistent and ever-changing attitudes towards motherhood. In the House of Commons on 6 March, Teresa Gorman introduced a bill under the ten-minute rule which proposed tax concessions for the costs incurred on childcare. Ivor Stanbrook immediately weighed in with the claim that there is "overwhelming evidence that working mothers suffer psychological damage and that they damage their children". He opposed the bill.

In contrast, there have been broad hints from the Treasury that we will soon see the provision of childcare facilities by employers no longer treated as a taxable "perk" but as an employee's entitlement, on the same basis as a car park or a canteen. As we go to press, the budget looks set to do just that.

Any attempt to analyse the concept of motherhood must address what is sometimes called the "biology/culture issue". This arises in many contexts, and concerns how far any aspect of human behaviour is determined by our genetic make-up and how far it is the outcome of social structures and socialisation. This is not simply a matter of scholarly interest but of major practical and political importance, for if a social characteristic or role is biologically based, then it can be regarded as "normal". If it is regarded as normal, then anyone who varies from it is unnatural or abnormal and may need to be "cured".

If, on the other hand, a role such as motherhood is regarded as socially created, then not only can it be changed, but a woman who does not want to be a mother is no more peculiar than one who does not want to be an airline pilot or to take up croquet.

These two examples are clearly social rather than biological in origin. The concept of motherhood, by contrast, merges the biological element of child*birth* with the social element of responsibility for child*care*. The idea of a "maternal instinct" arises from assuming that the *ability* to bear children is the same as a genetic *drive* to bear children, and then taking for granted the existence of a related drive to care for those children.

Arguments in favour of the existence of a maternal instinct take various forms. Psychoanalysis, for example, argues that the wish and the ability to be a mother is an innate urge which can only be satisfied by bearing, suckling and fondling a baby and later caring for it. Normal women make good mothers and find it a rewarding experience because it satisfies their psychological needs.

Ethologists who have observed the bonding that takes place between some animals and their young argue that the same phenomenon occurs in the human species, where it develops into love between mother and child. This makes the task of caring for children intrinsically rewarding: therefore women who do not find it so must have failed to bond with their child.

If behaviour is instinctive, it should be universal in the group concerned, and those who reject the notion of a necessary link between the biological and the social elements of motherhood point to the examples of fostering and adoption, as well as to the fact that some women do not wish to have children. In addition, human mothers often have to learn maternal skills rather than find they can exercise them "instinctively". Furthermore, in many societies, including our own, biological and social mothering can be separated, including the instance where one woman is paid to care for another woman's child.

Sociology and social anthropology stress the socially learned rather than innate. A female is thus seen as having been socialised into the maternal role from her earliest years. This has the result that many, even most women, do genuinely wish to be mothers. But the fact that many women derive great happiness from the experience is not evidence that it is instinctive. It does, however, still make it difficult for those who do not enjoy caring for children to admit this, for such an admission is tantamount to admitting to being unfeminine.

At the same time as motherhood is defined as normal and even as a source of joy and fulfilment, it is systematically devalued. "In a society that values production, child-bearing and child-rearing—that is, reproduction—command little concern or respect" (Boulton 1983). Motherhood is expected to be combined with housework and with marriage: the term "housewife" encapsulates both. But no wages are paid for domestic work and little value is placed on the skills of running a household, let alone the sheer physical stamina. Mothers and children have little economic and almost no political muscle and this is reflected in the low self-esteem of those women who say they are "only a housewife" and in the inadequacy of childcare facilities for women who want or need to work.

It is not any fundamental change in attitudes about motherhood that has prompted recent moves towards providing creches and tax relief on workplace nurseries. Rather, employers have realised they need to attract women into the workforce. If recent history is anything to go by, the next labour surplus will coincide with a rediscovery of the "fact" that women should stay at home and look after their children.

Discussion:

How do the rituals of Fathers Day compare with those of Mothers Day?

Boulton, M (1983) "On Being a Mother" Tavistock
Oakley, A (1976) "Housewife" Pelican

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House of the Rising Sun

This joint venture between Mitsubishi and Chrysler looks incongruous set in the rich black earth of McLean County in central Illinois. The plant is one of the most highly automated and robotised in the world. Ninety per cent of welding is done robotically, releasing the associates (there are no workers) from dangerous and tedious operations. Almost half a billion dollars worth of investment has gone into the 636 acre site. This has produced just under 3,000 jobs.

There is a stamping shop, body shop, plastic moulding shop, paint shop and final

Robots rub shoulders with humans; Japanese ways of working with US workers. In the mid west, the Japanese have come to town and are staging the future in a hi-tech plant

Jeremy Seabrook's latest book is "The Myth of the Market: Promises and Illusions"

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assembly area; the conveyor lines are eight miles in length. A 1.5 mile track allows for the test-driving of every vehicle. The low white building is surrounded by a wire mesh fence and rows of barbed wire. It looks like something between a military installation and a hospital.

Although this is an equal venture, few people in the plant can be unaware that Mitsubishi accounts for almost 10 per cent of the gross national product of Japan. One in ten of the Diamond Star Mitsubishi (DSM) workforce will be trained in Japan for a period up to 37 weeks. There are about 50 Japanese employees at present, and 100-150 technical assistants on short-term visits to help production under way. The plant opened in the autumn of 1988.

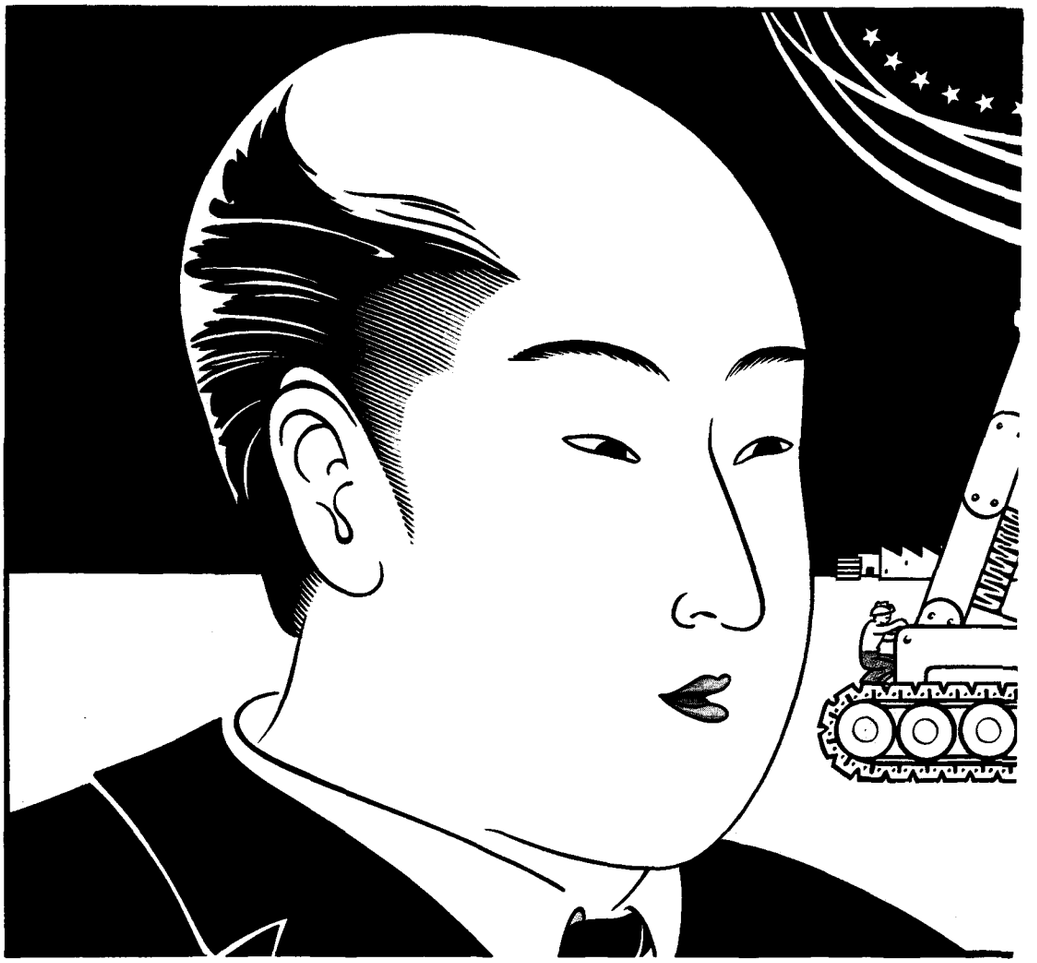
The Japanese say they have been surprised by the dedication of the Bloomington work force. It is no accident that the site chosen is the middle west, where the work ethic remains strong. The office hours of DSM are 7.30am until 4.12pm. When the first 300 jobs were advertised, there were more than 30,000 applicants. You don't have to travel far in Bloomington before you meet disappointed aspirants. Those accepted are the object of envy and admiration, forming, as they do, a new aristocracy of workers in a community whose egalitarianism is only apparent.

All applicants are screened by the Illinois Department of Social Security for information about their work record and basic skills. The next step is a battery of State-administered general aptitude tests before further screening at the DSM Assessment Center. A physical examination and routine drug test are also mandatory.

It goes against the grain for many people in the middle west to acknowledge the industrial superiority of the Japanese. There is some overt xenophobia, and an understandable reserve on the part of those who were on the death marches of world war two. Others insist that it is now time for Japan to share the burden of defending the free world.

There is also much criticism of the Japanese for having unfairly protected their industries. But perhaps the most common response would be familiar to us in Britian. It clearly echoes the proprietorial tolerance with which Britain once regarded the US, seeing in it an extension of an energy and vigour which originated in Britain. In the US, the reasoning goes like this: "We are the true initiators and innovators, the Japanese take over our inventions, improve upon them, perfect them." In this way, the Americans feel that they remain the original source of all that is most vital in the world, even though they get less of the credit for it, and little of the profit.

It turns out that Japanese management can be seen as simply a matter of common sense. "Kaizen", or continuous improvement, is at the heart of the Mitsubishi philosophy, and who could quarrel with that? As an employee of DSM, your advice and suggestions are sought for the enhancement of safety and efficiency. All suggestions are considered; if they are not implemented, you are given an explanation. It is easy to buy into such a system, so different from traditional manufacturing plants, where suggestions boxes grew dusty with disuse.



The training manual applies to all 3,000 associates. There is a common programme of work discipline. All wear the grey and maroon DSM uniform, which removes the last traces of any "them and us" attitude. All are part of the Diamond Star family. The United Auto-Workers' Union of America was recognised by the Company in 1988; although it is hoped that the need for it will wither away.

The team concept pervades the plant. There are teams of 10-15 people, who all work together under a team-leader. Each team has 20-30 job responsibilities. People are trained in all of these, and work rotated on a two-hourly basis, so that the working day remains varied. It also means that there is flexibility: if an employee is absent, someone else can cover. It is the antithesis of the monotony of the assembly-line, where people have always been given one simple, repetitive function. Naturally, the strong sense of belonging means there are many collective social activities. On the Friday I was there, I was told, "tomorrow some people are going to the ball-game in Peoria, there is a golf outing to Chicago, some women are shopping in Chicago, and there is a trip to the home of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield."

Among the associates are former bank-tellers, farmers, housewives, day-care workers, students. The level of educational attainment is relatively high. There is sophisticated equipment to operate and no quality inspection is carried out until the vehicle is completed. The teams themselves are responsible for quality, which is superb.

Donald Schoene is Executive Vice-President, Finance, and Treasurer. Before joining Diamond Star, he spent more than 25 years with Chrysler, and was Controller for Chrysler UK. He says: "Our eastern friends are very good at learning our western trades. They know how to modify and enhance our technology. This places us in the role of teachers, and the knowledge we impart is then transferred back, improved, to the USA."

While the robots take care of the work that is monotonous and dangerous, the associates become responsible only for what is most creative. There are three key words in Japanese: "Muri" means unreasonable; "Mura" means uneven; "Muda" means unnecessary. The approach is to remove all these from the workplace experience. This gains their loyalty. "In the past, the typical US plant would try to control waste by making the worker responsible for it; the workers became estranged from the company's ideals by having to do tasks that were not enhancing. The Japanese believe in consensual decision-making. This is also more efficient: our plant is two-thirds the size of the average US car plant. We have two million square feet, producing 240,000 cars a year, one thousand a day. The flow of work is so well planned that it can be carried out in a smaller space. It is a process-driven product and plant."

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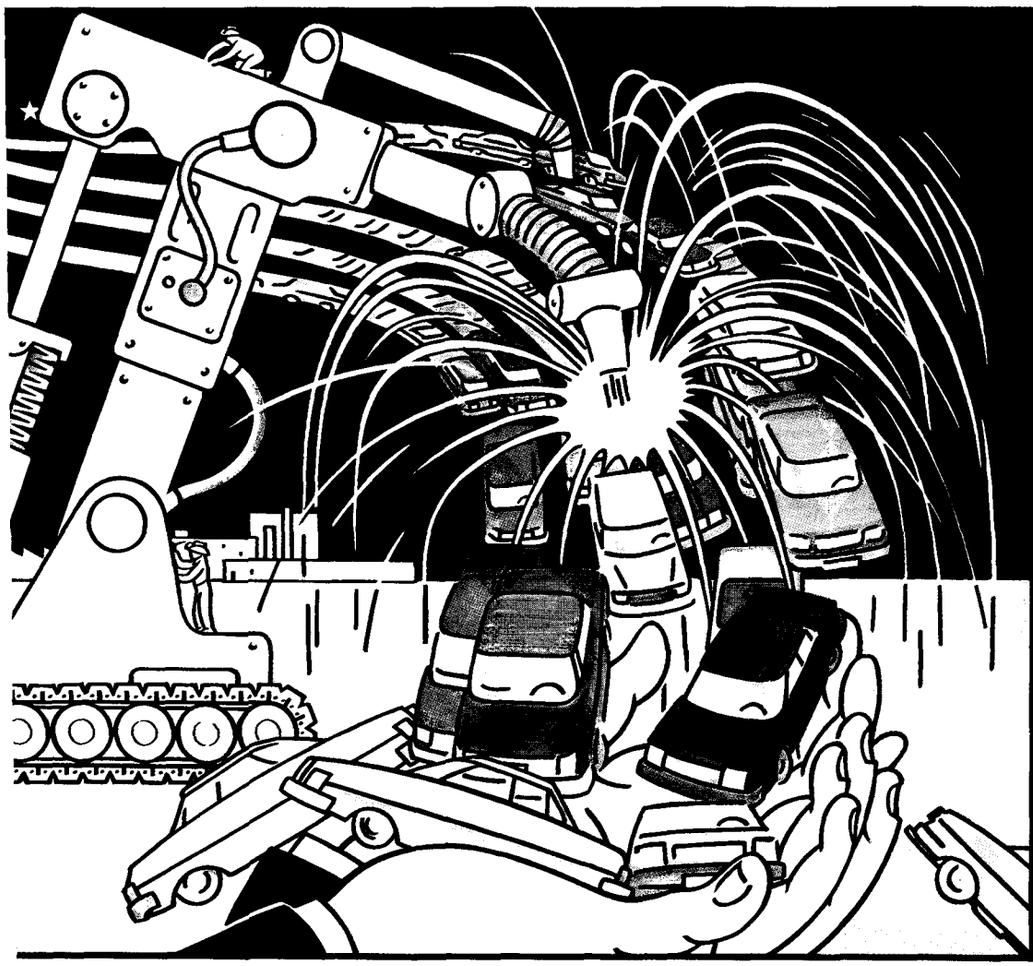

Mikki Rain

Robots emerge from their place of rest as skeletal arms, fingers, claws, eyes

When Diamond Star settled on Bloomington, they were anxious not to arrive in the middle west like a whirlwind. They wanted to stay on a par with the community, not offer sky-high wage rates that would disrupt the local economy. Everything has been discreet and without ostentation. The wage rates are comparable to those in the area, lower than in traditional assembly-plants. The associates are paid $9.95 an hour, and skilled maintenance people $11.74. DSM didn't want to strip other industries of their employees. Even so, there have been complaints in Peoria and Springfield that some heavy industrial works have lost people to DSM. The Japanese believe in "wa", harmony among people at all levels, and have sought to insert themselves as unobtrusively as possible in Bloomington-Normal.

In spite of its compactness, the workplace is so big that it is difficult to see from one end of the building to the other. A subdued white light pervades the space, from where the great rolls of metal arrive in the press shop, to the finished product. In the press shop, the panels are delivered to a computer-controlled storage area; they are stored robotically, and distributed to the body shop by automatic guided vehicles. Front and rear bumper fascias are moulded in the plastic shop. In the body shop, panels and undercarriage are welded together. There are more than 250 robots, and 90 per cent of the operations are automated. The conditions in the paint shop are said to be "hospital clean".

More than 70 robots seal the welded seams of the car body. The doors are then removed and the "operating hardware" is installed; instrument panel, heater, air conditioner are also set in place automatically. There is a "just in time" inventory management practice, which means that local suppliers can be alerted automatically when a new consignment of seats or tyres or some other component is due. This saves storage space.

The whole process moves forward at considerable speed: one vehicle is produced for every 23 work hours. There is something disturbing about the robots: they are installed like some vast giant human body. They emerge from their place of rest in the form of skeletal arms, fingers, claws, eyes, an exposed musculature deftly lifting and placing with the greatest precision. Each movement goes forward at a precisely calculated pace, and is preceded by an electronic warning tune that sounds like "Mary Had a Little Lamb", so that the employees can be clear of the arena of operation. When this is completed, the people move in to add their touch—so much lighter than the machines. The vehicles emerge in such a way that those who must work beneath them can work at eye level.

The guided vehicles taking the parts to the body shop emit a euphonic robotised warning as they go, following predetermined, computerised tracks along the floor. Although it all seems smooth and effortless, enormous force is used. The robotic welding process with its cascade of blue sparks is noisy and dazzling, the thud of the metal each time the whole ensemble moves forward demands ear-plugs, hard hats and goggles. There is little space for the employees to communicate beyond co-ordinating their specific function. Some of the operations are spectacularly graceful—the double or triple-jointed flexibility of metal arms that lift the windshield with suction-pads and dexterously place it in the aperture of the car.

Yet the subordination of the people to the process remains: the dwarfing, indeed, the inferiorising of human beings who must wait until the warning music comes, and then, with precision, accomplish their task, and then withdraw, so that the whole lot can proceed to the next work-station.

There are two eight-hour shifts at present, with a 42-minute meal break (this because time is measured in tenths of one hour.) The shifts begin at 7am and 3pm, and are preceded by 90 seconds of stretching exercises. Thirty-five per cent of the employees are women. Most are young. There has been only one serious accident so far—one associate thought a robot was in a training mode—ie, was still being taught the operation it had to perform, when it was already in the production mode.

That production can take place with such scant human intervention is both exalting and appalling: exalting because it makes the possibilities seem endless; appalling because so little of the labour saved is of any benefit to all the underoccupied and unemployed in the world. The finished products, the Eclipse and the Laser, stand on plinths in the reception area, a place of bare functional metal and marble, with only photographs of the Illinois countryside on the walls as ornament.

The embodiment of such power and strength in these robots is disturbing, because it represents the successful neutralisation of the working class, and celebrates the triumph of international capital which has, contrary to some predictions, proved itself to be the gravedigger of labour. This is perhaps the meaning of that dispersal of disembodied energies and powers in these tame machines. The flesh and blood has been liberated into the benign functions required by the service economy of Bloomington-Normal.

No wonder the associates of DSM must have intelligence, communicative ability and psychosocial skills. As well as doing their job, they are custodians of the funerary monument of a defunct working class. ●

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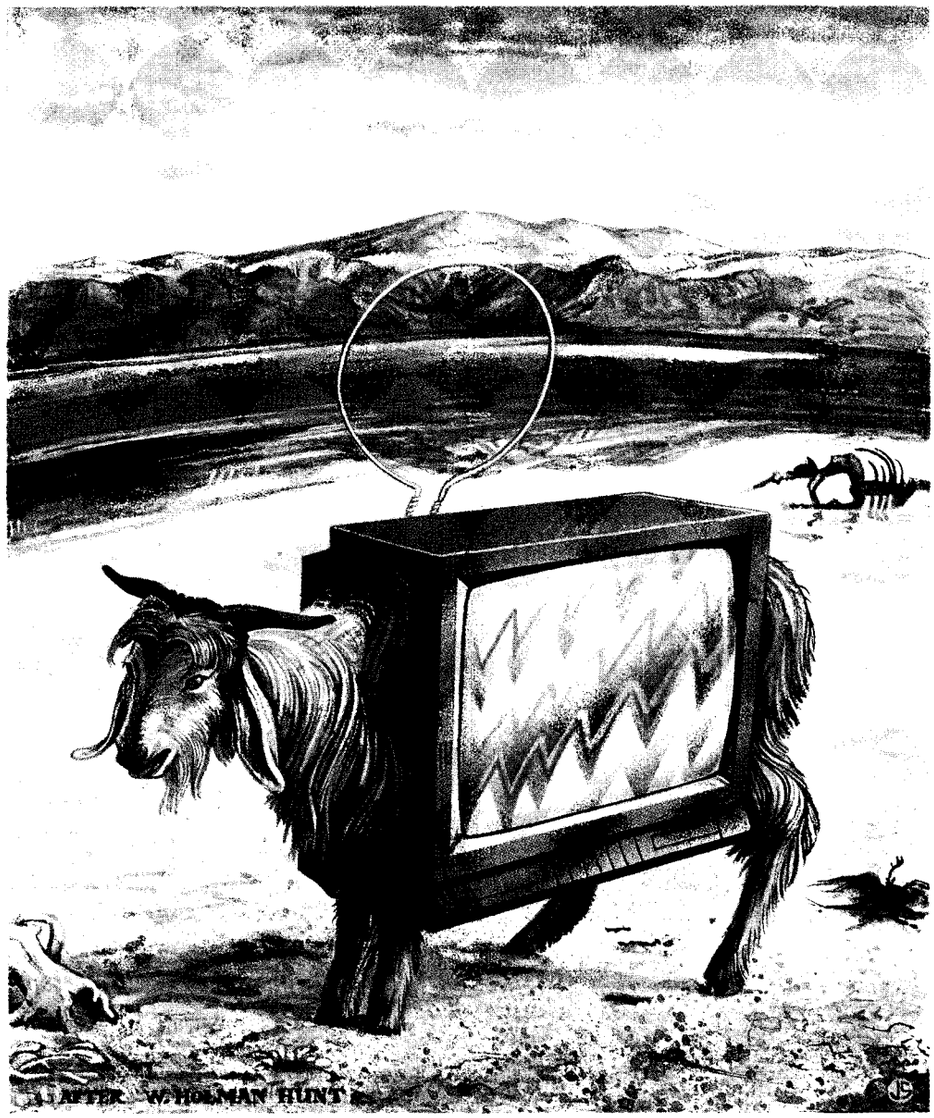

John Storey

Blame it on the box

THE EVIL EYE: THE UNACCEPTABLE FACE OF TELEVISION
Guy Lyon Playfair
Jonathan Cape £11.95

Colin MacCabe

At the time of the Hungerford massacre an almost instinctive reaction placed the blame on television violence. Yet what became clear from the killer's background was a much more crucial factor: the mushrooming of the new social phenomenon of gun clubs, with an associated world of macho fantasies which had nothing to do with television but a great deal to do with certain genres of pulp fiction and video. But to think hard about these facts, and look hard at the intersection of masculinity, class and entertainment in the world which transformed an asocial loner into a mass killer, is just too difficult. It's much easier to blame television.

Television is the last in a line of scapegoats that stretches back to the 19th century "yellow press" and beyond, with new forms of entertainment held responsible for every new social problem (and quite a lot of the old ones). The trouble with all such accusations is that the nexus of cause and effect is so complex that we really do not have the analytic tools with which to judge them. Guy Lyon Playfair's book does not in any way add to the debate. Unsubstantiated anecdote is piled on top of dubious academic research and linked to some well-founded criticism of television forms, to produce a nineties version of that middle-class snobbism which refused to have television in the house because it's bad for the children.

The difficulties can be gauged by a look at one admittedly astonishing statistic. The week after Angie tried to commit suicide on *Eastenders* admissions at a Hackney hospital for similar attempts went up 300 per cent. This would seem to be as plain a case of television's effect as one could wish. If one found this figure repeated nationally, there would be clear evidence of television directly affecting behaviour. We would then still have to ask how many of these people would have attempted suicide in any case, and whether Angie acted as a cause or a catalyst for them.

Before even getting to that stage, however, there's the unwelcome fact that when a serious piece of research investigated the admissions in 63 urban hospitals in the relevant week, the results were too confusing to allow any firm conclusions about imitation to be drawn. This doesn't bother Playfair. He continues the chapter by suggesting that there is a suicidal component in fatal car crashes, and by quoting figures which demonstrate an increase in car deaths in California after newspaper stories which prominently featured suicide. But now all that Playfair is proving, if we accept the thesis about suicide and car crashes, is that the world we live in affects us. It's not clear whether he is arguing that we should give up committing suicide, or give up reporting it.

Much of the book juxtaposes arguments of this kind. Reading that Playfair's recent works have included tomes on Uri Geller and psychical phenomena, one is tempted to reach for the trashcan rather than the shelf when deciding where this book should be stored.

Such an uncharitable judgement is probably a little harsh. Playfair does collect much uncomfortable research which suggests that television works in ways that we do not yet fully understand. But he then proceeds to explain the workings of television with the most banal of cause and effect models. As with psychical phenomena, we simply don't have explanatory frameworks adequate to deal with much of the evidence provided. Playfair's book does not begin to address these issues. Rather like television itself, he relies on simplification and refuses to engage with new ideas or new forms of explanation.

Indeed, the final irony of his book is that it offers just one more proof of television's central role in our society. Just as the tabloid press now sells itself on television gossip around the soaps, so the chattering classes must be provided with a "thought-provoking" book about television. The problem is that this book does not provoke thought, but merely panders to prejudice.

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Summer shadows

A SENSIBLE LIFE
Mary Wesley
Bantam Press £12.95

Lucasta Miller

A Sensible Life begins with a holiday. It is 1926, and the English upper-middle-classes converge on a seaside hotel in Brittany.

There are the Leighs: father, military and frightfully over-excited over rumours of a Bolshie general strike at home; mother, easy-going and interested mainly in shopping; public schoolboy son and his friend, out to *épater* with their socialist views; daughter, 17 and a right little flirt with painted nails that are the last word in chic. There are the Willoughbys, whose buck-toothed 14-year-old daughter reappears some years later (after extensive cosmetic dentistry) as an athletic *femme fatale*. There's a Dutch family of five dumpy daughters and an Adonis of a son. And there is Flora Trevelyan.

This is a holiday Flora will never forget. Ten years old, she is a dark, enigmatic child, and the victim of parental neglect that is positively abusive. She's not her father's child, but the offspring of her mother's only adulterous fling. As a result she becomes a hated object of resentment on one side and guilt on the other.

Denys and Vita Trevelyan don't express their anger in any clearly understood way. They may express irritation at the expense of hiring a governess or sending Flora to boarding school. As if to complete their daughter's emotional deprivation, they stop short of any passionate feelings towards her—even anger.

Apart from Denys's career in India, which gives them the excuse to leave Flora behind in Europe, all the Trevelyans seem to be interested in is each other's bodies. Their mutual sexual obsession leaves little room for Flora. When a beach picnic is organised by the English holiday-makers, they disengage themselves from the crowd to go and have it off behind a rock. Flora is watching from the cliff above. They seem intent on disturbing as well as depriving her.

A Sensible Life contains one of the most powerful images of childhood suffering I have ever read. Flora is found silently and determinedly walking out to sea with closed eyes. She can only be stopped by being physically carried off, biting and kicking. A child psychotherapist I know recalled a real case of similar behaviour in an autistic patient. Somehow, in this image, Mary Wesley has hit the nail on the head.

What is strange about *A Sensible Life* is that it fails to make the most of potent moments like this. At the end of the day, its characters cannot be said to have inner lives. The novel slides across the surface, and its moments of depth seem almost accidental.

The Breton holiday is unforgettable for Flora because she falls in love there—with young Cosmo Leigh, and his friend Hubert, and with Frederic, the Dutch Adonis. The rest of the novel—which spans nearly 40 years—recounts her subsequent encounters with these three. Yet, though the blurb on the dust-jacket stresses the tenderness and compassion with which Flora's relationships are explored, not only the relationships themselves but also Wesley's presentation of them come across as strangely hollow.

One episode, in which Flora escapes the boarding school where she usually spends her holidays to visit the Leighs, figures in the blurb as "high comedy". I found it altogether more sinister. On the last night of her visit, Tashi (Cosmo's sister) dresses up 15-year-old Flora in skin-tight black satin to titillate her father, her fiancé, and the other assembled men. Flora does not question her being turned into a sex object. She seems perfectly happy. But these are her only friends, and perhaps she cannot afford to complain.

Like her protagonist, Mary Wesley doesn't question what appears as Flora's repeated exploitation and abuse. Though *A Sensible Life* has its illuminating moments, the detached tone de-activates them. Flora's story is disturbing, but Wesley seems almost unconscious of these elements. Either that, or she is trying to gloss them over with an unemotive monochrome. If you accept the invitation on the dust-jacket and look for compassion and comedy, you won't find anything very substantial. But this book does contain hints of something rather darker.

Danger signals

OPEN VERDICT
Tony Collins
Sphere £4.99

David Barrett

Late in 1986, two young Asian computer programmers drove separately from London to Bristol. Both then died in bizarre circumstances. Vimal Bhagvangi Dajibhai, who worked for Marconi Underwater Systems near Watford, fell 245 feet to his death on a footpath beneath the Clifton Suspension Bridge, only a week before he was due to leave Marconi. According to friends he had been looking forward to his new job, and had absolutely no reason to commit suicide.

Less than three months later, Arshad Sharif, who worked for Marconi Defence Systems in Stanmore, Middlesex, was found in a car with one end of a nylon rope tied around his neck, and the other to a tree.

The following March 37-year-old David Sands was driving to work when he abruptly did a U-turn on the A33 near Basingstoke, and drove at 80mph into a boarded-up Little Chef cafe. His car, which had two five-gallon cans of petrol in the boot, exploded. Sands had worked as a senior communications engineer at Easams, a computer software subsidiary of electronics giant GEC. Easams, like Marconi, is deeply involved in research and development of secret electronic defence systems. Just before his death Sands, according to his widow, had been considering a complete change of lifestyle. "He felt he was in a ratrace," she said at the inquest.

Open Verdict explores the links between these deaths, and more than 20 others. According to Tony Collins, many of those who died in similar bizarre circumstances worked in electronic defence research; many had been planning to leave their jobs. Five had worked for probably the most secretive establishment in the country, GCHQ.

Government Communications Headquarters, with its two major sites in Cheltenham, intercepts and processes electronic signals around the world, including commercial, diplomatic and military communications. The degree of success of its Sigint (signals intelligence) operations is one of its most closely guarded secrets. We do know that it regularly monitors radar and similar electronic emissions, and that it has top secret contracts with companies such as Marconi, GEC and Plessey.

Keeping secrets secret is a difficult business. You can lock up prototypes and computer discs, but you can't put a combination lock on the knowledge in someone's brain; you just have to trust your staff. And if you think that an employee is disaffected and might talk—however many copies of the Official Secrets Acts they may have signed—how do you stop them?

There is no direct evidence that any of the people discussed was murdered, and Collins is careful to draw an open verdict himself. There is another possibility, which Collins only hints at, but which is familiar to me from former colleagues at GCHQ, where I worked for six years in the 1980s. If you work in defence or intelligence, who do you turn to if you become disenchanted with your work, or if you begin to question the morality of what you are doing? The higher the level of security, the less you dare to confess what you begin to see as weakness. You become scared of losing your clearances and being taken off classified work. Once the process of self-doubt has started, it can snowball.

In Britain security is covert and insidious, and you don't know where it comes from. You can reach the stage where, if a security officer looks you in the eye, or a senior colleague asks how things are going, you become convinced that you are under suspicion. When it all gets too much and you decide to leave, you see shadows around every corner from the moment you announce your resignation.

They may well be totally groundless, but the fears themselves are real for those affected by them. Stresses such as these could lead to suicide. The two London-based Asians who died within three months of each other in Bristol were both about to leave Marconi. We may never discover whether the psychological pressures led them to kill themselves, or whether they were silenced because someone suspected they might talk.

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Jordan (left) and Walker: wild women and contributors to a literary treasure trove

Reborn again

WILD WOMEN IN THE WHIRLWIND
Joanne Braxton and Andree McLaughlin (editors)
Serpent's Tail £12.95

Barbara Burford

Wild Women in the Whirlwind—Afra-American Culture and the Contemporary Literary Renaissance is more than just a two-part title, the first catchily alliterative and provocative, the second seriously academic. It is for once a true description of a work that is both excitingly accessible and sets a rigorous standard of scholarship.

This collection of essays about black female contributions to the literary culture of the Americas is written by a Who's Who of the foremost names in US Black Studies. Depending on your socio-political views, the small biographies of the authors will either make your bosom swell with pride or make you reach for the smelling salts. But it is there you learn how much work is being done on the excavation of a cultural and literary treasure trove of far greater significance and beauty, for black people, than any Sutton Hoo burial.

Did you know that there is a 30-volume series called *The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers*? I didn't . I'm not going to rush out and buy them, and probably couldn't afford them anyway. But any library worth its salt should. They are another set of signposts that show contemporary black women writers in renaissance after renaissance—has any other cultural group had so many rebirths?—and not standing in mid-air, holding ourselves up by our shoelaces.

One of the essays, *The Difficult Miracle of Black Poetry in America or Something Like a Sonnet for Phillis Wheatley* by June Jordan, illustrates all the qualities of this book: "A poet is African in Africa, or Irish in Ireland, or French on the Left Bank of Paris, or white in Wisconsin. A poet writes in her own language. A poet writes of her own people, her own history, her own vision, her own room, her own house... A poet is somebody free. A poet is someone at home. How should there be black poets in America? It was not natural. And she was the first. In 1761..."

Phillis Wheatley was sold at auction at seven years old, and stripped of her cultural heritage—language, name, history,—with the same indifferently efficient cruelty that took away her other rights. Yet she published her first poem at 17: "She says that her poetry results from an intrinsic ardor, not to dismiss the extraordinary kindness of the Wheatleys (her owners) and not to diminish the wealth of white men's literature with which she found herself quite saturated, but it was none of those extrinsic factors that compelled the labors of her poetry. It was she who created herself a poet, notwithstanding and despite of everything around her."

Using the forms of black American speech, and the chorus *Was it a nice day? Does it matter?*, June Jordan not only gives us an introduction to the short, miraculous life of Phillis Wheatley, but shows us how a black poet in America today can use the legacy of those gone before to sing praise songs both to them and our contemporary selves.

When in 1977 Barbara Smith wrote *Toward a Black Feminist Criticism*, she was at the beginning of yet another renaissance of black writing. She wanted to point out that black women writers existed, and to have the sexual oppression in black women's lives acknowledged. She wanted black people, men and women, writers and readers, academics and teachers, to look at those women writers who had chosen to speak out about sexual oppression and sexual orientation.

In her essay *Black Lesbians in Fiction in the 1980s* she quotes from the critic Barbara Christian: "Lesbian life, characters, language, values are at present and to some extent becoming respectable in American literature...I say to some extent, because despite the fact that [Alice] Walker received the Pulitzer for *The Color Purple* and [Gloria] Naylor the American Book Award for *The Women of Brewster Place*, I doubt if *Home Girls*, an anthology of black feminist and lesbian writing that was published by Kitchen Table Press, would have been published by a mainstream publishing company."

Barbara Smith makes it clear that while black lesbian writers are still published by small independent presses, non-lesbian and closeted black women writers now have access to both trade and alternative presses, even when writing about black lesbian characters. She quotes Alice Walker: "Perhaps black women writers and nonwriters should say, simply, whenever black lesbians are being put down, held up, messed over, and generally told their lives should not be encouraged, 'We are all lesbians.' For surely it is better to be thought a lesbian, and to write and say your life exactly as you experience it, than to be a token 'pet' black woman for those whose contempt for our autonomous existence makes them a menace to human life."

Which brings us back to Phillis Wheatley. Surely if she is to be celebrated, and she is, for her intrinsic ability to create poetry using the forms of another culture, how much more should we celebrate someone like Audre Lorde? She has reached another stage, and is creating poetry out of her intrinsic wholeness as an Afra-American lesbian writer and poet. *Wild Women in the Whirlwind* explores the full spectrum of this rich cultural heritage with scholarly rigour, a great deal of loving care, and no small amount of "I told you so!" glee.

Macho Mick

HARP
John Gregory Dunne
Granta Books £13.99

John Lahr

John Gregory Dunne is hell on a short fuse, or so he would have us believe. He's not shanty Irish. His great-grandfather, who made his way from Ireland to Hartford, Connecticut, prospered in the grocery business, bought a bank and got his family on the right side of the American tracks. Dunne owes the privilege he flaunts to this lineage of good sense and service. Dunne's father was a surgeon; and Dunne too is an operator. He has made novels, made movies and made Joan Didion who, for over 25 years, has been both his wife and his party piece.

Until they moved back to New York recently, the Dunnes were the Lunts of the Los Angeles literary scene. And although Dunne hates stage actors, he's a real ham when it comes to talking

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shop. "I am a writer. I am a professional writer. I write to make a living. If writing is my calling it is also my job... It is the only job I have." Dunne likes to swagger in prose. "The true harp voice," he writes, meaning his own hard-bitten Irish sneer, "is the voice of a man with a chip on his shoulder the size of a California redwood." In Dunne's case, the chip is easy to explain. He has achieved everything but significance.

"A writer is an eternal outsider," Dunne says, "his nose pressed against whatever window on the other side of which he sees his material." But Dunne's memoir dramatises him as Mr Insider. "I once gave a cocktail party attended by two Nobel laureates, one a scientist, one a poet. 'Cocktail party for B & J', my daybook said. 'Derek Walcott, Edna O'Brien, Harrison Ford, etc.'" Don't you love the "etc"?

In *Harp*, Dunne insists one minute that he's a reporter telling us the truth about his life, and the next that he's a storyteller reshaping it to a more delightful symmetry. Naturally, he invokes their good friend Lillian Hellman and defends her vainglorious falsehoods as part of a storyteller's divine right. And when he describes the trauma of his heart operation, the omen that clinches the drama and comedy of his terror revolves around another literary star. "By accident I erased Susan Sontag's name and address from my computer telephone directory; Susan wrote *Illness as Metaphor*; I was going to die. The next day... I was able to retrieve Susan's file: I was going to live."

He gets health tips from the chief *New York Times* book reviewer Christopher Lehman-Haupt, nominates Calvin Trillin to tell his daughter the news in case he dies, and on a post-operative trip to discover his Irish roots dines with "the biographer-historian Antonia Fraser" whose family line was falsely linked to his. The Concorde flights, the sagas about travel, the hotel rooms, the embassy parties are all vouchers of Dunne's reputability. This is no ordinary "schmuck with an Underwood"; this is a big prick. As Dunne himself so piquantly expresses his credo: "Although it's not necessary for a writer to be a big prick, neither does it hurt."

After an underwhelming degree from Princeton and a stint in the army, Dunne ended up as some sort of a writer. Just what kind of a writer still seems up for grabs. In *Harp*, he tries to show the punter how he does it: how he hunts for material, how he fantasises a situation, how he builds up a character, how he reads the landscape of objects and status symbols for clues of identity, how he fights over experience with his writer-wife. "How do I deal with J? Is it too coy to just call her 'J'?," he writes, coyly. "Or 'Joan' or 'my wife'. No other ID. I think so. She dislikes being considered as part of a couple as much as I do. Too much mileage on that construct." But on the evidence of *Harp*, there's still some life in the old dame yet. For all this talk about novels and how to write them, Dunne has only written four, and does anybody know their names?

Dunne presents himself as a stylist, and he does have a readable, bluff colloquial manner. "There is no good that can come from a telephone call at 4.30 in the morning", is the opening sentence to his memoir and the beginning of a very powerful account of his kid brother's suicide. But the voice is not quite as polished as he fondly thinks. Dunne writes of "the Reagan kakistocracy"; of his niece's boyfriend strangling her "for three and one-half minutes, choking the life from her body". These vulgarities, which stick in the mind like a pebble in a shoe, make his pretentions to prowess irritiating.

On his way to El Salvador, Dunne jots these notes about meeting local politicos: "Watch for: a sense of self-importance, a slight inflation, a theatrical response. A sense of being on the world's stage." It's advice Dunne would have done well to heed before journeying into his own interior.

The king of comedy

WOODY ALLEN
Graham McCann
Polity Press £14.95

Sean French

The career of Woody Allen is a natural successor to the subject of Graham McCann's previous book, *Marilyn Monroe*. Like Monroe, Allen has become a source of fantasy. McCann cites the findings of a remarkable study which showed how many Americans dream about Woody Allen. As he argues, what Allen has done is to take certain comic models—Bob Hope is one of the more obvious—and remake them into a modern form of masculinity.

In his first films Woody Allen's character was the familiar hapless shlemiel, the victim and failure who could do nothing right. But gradually, in *Love and Death*, and triumphantly in *Annie Hall*, he transformed the character into a modern hero.

To an even greater extent than Marilyn Monroe, Woody Allen has become inextricably confused with the characters he plays. Allen himself makes perfunctory attempts to deny the connection, but he has consistently used so many details from his well-broadcast private life that the connections have been difficult for audiences to ignore, and have themselves become a major part of their appeal.

McCann deals far more impressively with these paradoxes here than in the earlier book. Less praiseworthy, perhaps, is his decidedly unscholarly attitude to his subjects (though McCann himself is a Cambridge University lecturer in social and political theory). The Marilyn Monroe study read at times like a love letter written in defence of the dead star. Similarly this book reads at times as an act of idolatry: virtually all other comedians are cited in order to be unfavourably compared with Allen. Particular vitriol is reserved for those who venture to criticise the great man.

At times the tone can be fawning. His chapter on Allen and New York concludes with an embarrassing wink at the opening of *Manhattan*: "Woody Allen is triumphantly himself, a unique individual—a wonderful comic archetype, a New Yorker who is an outstanding interpreter of New York. This is *his* city and, one way or another, 'it always will be'." This is gush, not cultural criticism.

But most of the book is better, and one benefit of McCann's adoration is that he quotes at length from his hero. Even at his gloomiest, lamenting his supposed inability to give interesting interviews, Allen can't resist coining one-liners: "I really hate letting people down. I mean... well, you know, somebody comes here and expects some terrific quote or overview of the world. Like, is Armageddon about to come and if so will it be before or after dinner?"

The book's division into sections on Jewishness, New York, celebrity, cinema and so on can lead to tiresome repetition as films, particularly *Annie Hall*, recur. McCann's readings of individual films are suggestive, though he is at his best when examining the Woody Allen persona, that strange area where art and life mingle.

McCann can be infuriatingly lax on matters of detail. The direction of *The Sorrow and the Pity* is attributed to Marcel Ophuls's father, Max, even though father and son are discussed a few pages later; the author of *Catch-22* is christened *Phillip* Heller in both text and index; the musical *On the Town* is described as "three soldiers on a three-day pass" rather than three sailors on a one-day pass. And did Alvy Singer (in *Annie Hall*) really *drive* all the way from New York to Los Angeles, rather than just from the airport?

Woody Allen/Love and Death/Kobal Collection

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Sacred and profane

JOURNAL II 1957-1969
Mircea Eliade
Translated from the French by Fred H Johnson, Junior
University of Chicago Press £10.25
JOURNAL IV 1979-1985
Mircea Eliade
Translated from the Romanian by Mac Linscott Ricketts
University of Chicago Press £15.95

Paul Binding

In a journal entry for May 1963 Mircea Eliade attributed his "basic optimism" to his encounters with the Romanian peasantry and their faith, a "cosmic Christianity", which has "long since disappeared in the West": "The peasant believes that the world is good, that it returned to that state after the incarnation, death and resurrection of the Saviour."

From his experience of this faith sprang Eliade's notions of *hierophany*, a term of his own coinage meaning the "manifestation of the holy"; and of the progressive *hierophanisation* of the world. A Christian, he did not deplore the secular nature of western society since he saw in the absence of institutionalised religion the opportunity for the sacramental to be present in ordinary life. It is an optimistic vision, since it accords man the ability to endow the business of living with extra-mundane significance, and to defy death through the intensity of certain acts and events. It came only after years of intense labour, divided loyalties and sufferings that would have broken individuals of a less developed mental life.

Born in Bucharest in 1907, Eliade grew up in a Romania relatively open in its cultural activity, and emerged as a writer of fiction there at a young age. However, he notes here that the world of myth was always more real to him than the emotions and doings of people compelled to live in time and space.

He went to India to study under the eminent Indologist, Dasgupta, and then returned to Romania to begin what was to be his life's work, the history of religion. He spent the war years in London and Lisbon, and then in 1945 began to teach the history of religion in Paris. He did not return to Romania after the war, though to the end of his life he spoke of it as the "homeland". In 1957 he joined the Divinity School and later the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. The two volumes of journals cover this period. He was a man of quite prodigious industry, and the accounts of what he was undertaking—in a new country, and at a reasonably advanced age—are an extraordinary testimony to the generative ability of the controlled, educated mind.

Though not a great reader of newspapers, he observed the changes that came over American society in the sixties. On the whole, he welcomed youth culture and the sexual revolution for its defiance of materialism and pursuit of ecstasy. But it would be wrong to look for much illuminating commentary on America from these journals; Eliade was too intimately linked to Europe to respond with any spiritual fullness to the United States. Instead, these diaries are like chips from some great statue in the making, an apt parallel given Eliade's interest in sculpture and profound admiration for his famous fellow-countryman, Brancusi. He jots down thoughts on culture, on the persistence or translation of the religious, and on ritual in daily life. We know he will incorporate them into his unflinching and exhaustive studies.

Eliade is hard to know, perhaps in life as in the journals. He gives little away; even anecdotes about his dealings with Chicago colleagues don't tell us much. There was a dark secret in his life, and yet even here he is curiously, exasperatingly reticent.

His association with prominent Iron Guardists led him to be branded in Romania, Italy and Israel as a fascist and anti-semite. Nothing recorded here would suggest any truth in these allegations, though he does speak of his association with Nae Ionesco as a *felix culpa* that delivered him from Stalinist Romania and the later terrible regime of the Ceausescus. One has to say, though, that a certain élitism characterises his stances. In one of his darker forevisions of what might happen in Europe, he sees Africans wandering round the ruins of occidental culture. But against this must be set his capacity for dialogue, and ability to interest himself in the work and ideas of other people.

The Eliade we meet in Journal IV is experiencing the physical and psychological humiliations of old age, and has to work hard at keeping depression and resentment at bay. He has cataracts, suffers appalling arthritic pain which (also painful) treatment doesn't alleviate, his wife is ill, friends die, and memory betrays him. He gets terribly tired, words escape him, and he is often filled with a sense of pointlessness, even

A certain élitism characterises his stances. In one of his darker forevisions of what might happen in Europe, he sees Africans wandering round the ruins of occidental culture

though to the very last day recorded he is busy with momentous intellectual tasks. All these things he writes about with a clarity that attains a remarkable dignity.

Yet he still enjoys hours of appreciation of life as intense as an adolescent's: "When we gather on the terrace in front of the house...I am suffused with an almost inconceivable feeling of peace. I gaze fascinated at the centuries-old linden tree (as if I were seeing it for the first time)." Then, indeed, we can feel his belief in hierophany to be vindicated.

The City by Frans Masereel/Redstone Press

Tales of the city

Books on urban life

Colin Ward

In the year 985 the Arab geographer Al Muqaddasi classified cities, towns and villages in a "nested hierarchy" of rank in a book called *The Classification of the Knowledge of Regions*. His latest successor is Emrys Jones whose *Metropolis: the World's Great Cities* (Oxford £6.95) takes us lucidly through space and time and through successive attempts to grapple with the phenomenon of super-cities, from Central Place theory to the "non-place urban realm".

Mention any of the world-scale cities and we think first not of the stimulations and excitements they provide, but of the problems they pose, insoluble simply because of their size. Jones shows how the metropolitan cities of the rich world have struggled to find appropriate systems of urban government, while the initiative in the poor world has been taken by the unofficial cities of squatters and shanty dwellers.

Another new analysis of urban issues, *The Living City: towards a sustainable future*, edited by David Cadman and Geoffrey Payne (Routledge £35) contrasts mainstream perceptions of what is happening to world cities with the alternative views of advocates of ecologically sustainable economics. There is no dramatic contrast. Both sets of authors perceive that in third world cities investment in the rural hinterland would make the process of migration a little more manageable.

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Both recognise that such advice is unheeded, though in *some* countries alternative urban centres are absorbing part of the drift to the metropolis. It is a book full of interesting insights, sabotaged by the publishers who have priced it out of the market.

David Boyle's *Building Futures: a layman's guide to the inner city debate* (W H Allen £6.95) is an excellent simple exposition of the issues in Britain, with an emphasis on community action and on the validity of the decentralist tradition of Ebenezer Howard. The author recognises the myopia of current governmental window-dressing in the cities. The same is true of *The Humane City* by John R Short (Basil Blackwell £25 h/b, £7.95 p/b). Here is a sympathetically-argued case against the current vogue for "cities as if only capital matters", and against "cities as if only professionals matter" as well as "cities as if only some people matter". It is a post-Thatcher, post-Reagan reassertion of the popular, populist approach to urban issues, with wise words about passenger transport, sensible housing and citizen involvement in schools and health provision.

These books are simply one current slice of the endless literature of cities. I chose them because, unlike much of the output, they are all written in a language that citizens can understand.

George Rodger/Magnum

Wartime Cairo, 1941, Shepheard's Hotel Terrace

The award of a Nobel literature prize to a non-Anglophone author usually leads here to few days' desperate scouring of cuttings files, followed by a media oblivion as deep as ever before. So Doubleday deserve applause for issuing a group of novels by the Egyptian laureate for 1988, Naguib Mahfouz, born in 1911 and still the Tolstoy or Balzac of the Cairo streets. *Palace Walk* (£12.95), written in the fifties but only now translated, forms the first part of Mahfouz's Cairo trilogy, set during the British occupation of Egypt in the 1900s. Three paperback novels reflect different phases of his long but consistent career as what Balzac called "the secretary of society": *The Beginning and the End* (£5.95); *Wedding Song*; and *The Thief and the Dogs* (both £4.95). (Boyd Tonkin)

Mastermind

REBEL WITH A CAUSE: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF H J EYSENCK, Ph.D, D.Sc.
Hans Eysenck
W H Allen £14.95

Roy Porter

Freud's autobiography notoriously contains not a syllable of Freudian analysis. No one could accuse Professor Eysenck of following his *bête noire*'s modest precedent. In these memoirs of a psychologist, Eysenck draws constantly upon the theories of personality which made him Britain's most eminent, or notorious, psychologist during a long career at the Institute of Psychiatry. By his own confession soft-hearted, easy-going, Eysenck portrays himself here as a classic "introvert".

Not all Eysenck watchers will immediately recognize the likeness of this self-styled "apostle of moderation". To doubters, he has a ready answer. If, on occasion, he has been a pugnacious controversialist, it is because he sometimes has to step out of character, in defence of the weak and, above all, of Truth. For he has lived through hard times.

Be they Hitler, loopy Freudians, or latter-day Lefties, all his life he has been assailed by enemies of science and freedom of thought. His first boss, Sir Cyril Burt, became an "ever hostile power"; his second, Sir Aubrey Lewis, an "implacable enemy". Beset by dogma and dictators, his mission has always been to champion underdogs and stand up for Reason—from teenage times in Nazi Berlin when he defended Jews, through to his recent debunkings of the "cancer mafia" and the "anti-racist industry". Eysenck prides himself on being a rebel; not, of course, of the "infantile" variety (his favourite slur-word—though we all know he has no truck with Oedipal nonsense); but one whose rebelliousness has been thrust upon him by the "neuroticism" and "psychoticism" of others. "I always felt like Luther...*Hier stehe ich..ich kann nicht anders*".

The reader grows perturbed. Aren't we encountering the classic unreliable narrator? Can Eysenck really be the prodigy here paraded? In his youth, little Hans was a star tennis player, a natural boxer and skier, and irresistible to women—though also a doughty feminist. Later he became a pioneer of scientific personality analysis and founder of behavioural psychology, not to mention a superb broadcaster and prolific author. Blessed with a photographic memory, he could, he tells us, write a book in a fortnight, and read one in just half an hour (which may explain his attribution of Dylan Thomas's finest lines to Yeats).

Perhaps this is all in the cause of candour, not self-aggrandisement—though ponder the absurdly pompous title. But does Eysenck really believe so many of his colleagues and contemporaries were enemies of reason? And how can someone commonly seen as an establishment pillar and conservative ideologue be so self-deluding as to mistake himself for a David battling hordes of Goliaths?

So bent is Eysenck on scientificity that he inserts supporting third-party evidence. Yet this proves still more disconcerting. A former student is quoted, noting that when Eysenck argued, the "goal was to win...the strategy was to defeat". So is he an intellectual bully? Of course not. He vanquished his rivals, for sure, but that was because of his talents as psychometrician, platform speaker and so on. In any case, reason was on his side.

Whether or not this is the real Professor Eysenck, a final doubt intrudes. Can a man who apparently possesses such limited insight into himself and his fellows possibly be any good as a psychologist? Doesn't autobiography act here as auto-critique? Again, Eysenck has the answer. Though the *doyen* of scientific psychologists, he never possessed, he confesses, the knack of everyday psychology, of small-talk and intimacy.

As always, this is offered as further proof of heroic triumph over adversity. The reader may view it as a more damning, if poignant, revelation; one inadvertently eloquent about personality psychology and fit to serve as an epitaph upon this hectoring *apologia pro vita sua*.

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Long, slow African dawn

Marek Kohn talks to Hugh Masekela

On Easter Monday, the stars of musical solidarity will combine to raise the curtain for Nelson Mandela's appearance at Wembley Stadium. Contrary to the organisers' original understanding, however, Hugh Masekela is unlikely to be among them. His absence removes a thread from the weave of the event's history. The tribute is the latest expression of the longstanding relationship between popular music and the struggle against apartheid. Masekela was part of this symbiosis in the mid-fifties, playing the trumpet in Trevor Huddleston's Jazz Band.

After decades of exile, he remains resolutely political. His remarks gravitate inexorably from the personal to the general, in the self-denying manner of the disciplined cadre. Yet in his obdurate individualism, he is every inch the hard-bitten musician. His dismissal of the Wembley concert is the more damning for its laconic tone: "We have other bookings." Moreover, he continues, "the last time we did this show at Wembley, it turned out to be more of a showcase for top British groups than it had to do with Mandela's birthday or with the solidarity thing for all of us."

"The British people have the right to welcome Mandela's release but you have to realise that our obsessions and anxieties are not momentary. We have lived with this thing long before it became fashionable. I've lived with it for 51 years, so one day does not make the wound heal. It's very good for Mandela and his colleagues to get visibility, but I think we look forward to playing for them at home, under the right conditions in a free country."

"There's a certain element that seems to come in and enjoy whatever situations and suffering happen, for a day. Then they're gone, but we still have to live with it."

Masekela's cynicism extends to his view of recent events in South Africa itself. "I think that basically the euphoria over Mandela's release and the unbanning of the parties is more a media event than a reality," he says, adding that the country into which Mandela and the other prisoners have been released is "thousands of percentages worse than when they went to jail". He is especially scathing about the idea that the process of political change requires reassurances for pro-apartheid whites. "How long are we supposed to nurse the feelings of South African Europeans who oppress us in our own country? That is tantamount to saying, 'well, Hitler has turned off the ovens, let's reward him'".

Masekela's exile is the result of both political and economic oppression, and it also goes with his occupation. As he points out, "if we were a free country, I'd still be travelling." He lives in the vanguard of modern technology, oscillating between airports and recording studios, but one of his most cherished causes is the preservation of traditional African culture. He speaks of the ecological need to go back to the land, and suggests that Africa could show the world the way.

The cultural project would have to be a pan-African one, he believes, but he would like its nucleus to be in Botswana. It was there that he established his International School of Music, which was effectively abandoned after raids on exiles by South African commandos in 1985.

> *'He speaks of the ecological need to go back to the land, and suggests that Africa could lead the way'*

Masekela sees no contradictions between traditional and contemporary forms of African music. Africans, he affirms, are strong and flexible enough to embrace both. His own example illustrates the point: "All musicians are inspired by the people and environments they come from, so the music I play is my interpretation of the music of my people. I'm a white scholar of music—I went to a conservatory—and I went heavily into jazz and be-bop and swing and doo-wop and rhythm and blues. I'm a scholar of all those categories. I see them just as one, because I look at them from an African perspective."

His terseness on the subject of western fashions does not extend to "world music". Does he detect any taint of neo-colonialism in the phenomenon? "No. I'd like to encourage it. I'd like to see the excitement that there is about African music be a reality and not just a media celebration. Be nice to see the artists that they are talking about sell as many records as the rock'n'roll bands." Rock'n'roll is one of the few musical forms that Masekela can't stand.

"Economically it would be great for us," he observes. "Whatever we can pump into the continent is great. It doesn't have to be purist. The fact that we have an African urban style is great, because if it wasn't for an African urban style, the world would still be square. Except maybe light classical music, everybody who wants to try and make a successful record has to try and sing like an African American.

"It goes back to the urbanisation of the African. It has been good for everybody except the African, so he should benefit from it, and the way he can benefit from it is to figure out what part of it is left he can still own."

Ownership, in the straightforward material sense, is the kernel of the problem. Asked about the current state of South African music, Masekela replies that "it's commensurate with the conditions in the country. It might look colourful because we've seen Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens, and Black Mambazo. We have thousands and thousands of great musicians, but they don't have the chance. They don't have the opportunities, they don't have the infrastructure, they don't have the industry to work in, and basically they're still exploited.

"We should have African distributors of records, African record stores, African record companies, African heads of promotion, chairmen of companies, because it's our music. So we might have a few talented people who get heard overseas, but basically we're still mowing the lawn."

Hugh Masekela is playing the International 2, Manchester on 23 March and the Road Menders Centre, Northampton on 24 March.

Jillian Edelstein

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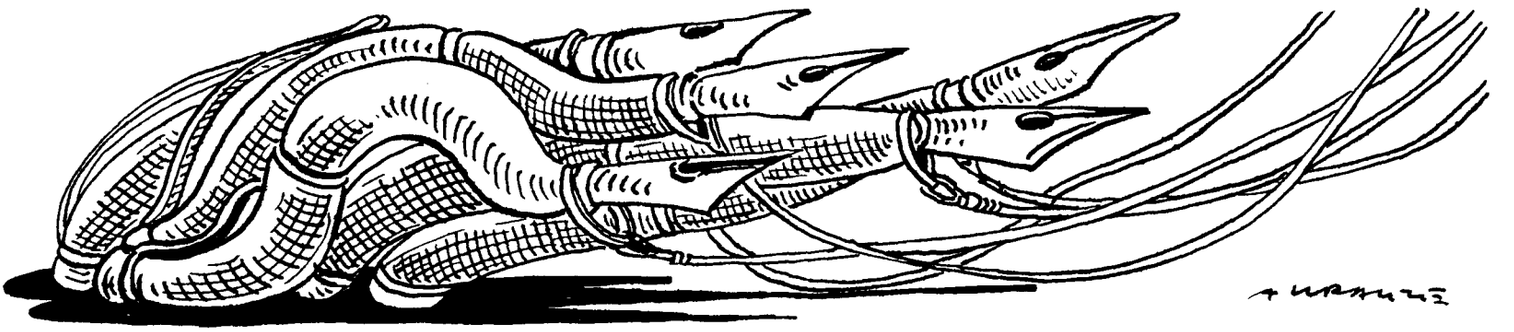

Andrzej Krauze

Comment

Writers take to the streets

Kathy Acker's New York diary

Today in New York City a thirteen-year-old boy burned another boy, perhaps to death, for not smoking crack with him.

Otherwise, the news is full of the Japanese. They seem about to own New York. According to David Dresser in *Eros Plus Massacre*, in the 1960s Japanese youth, artists and radicals fought to eradicate stagnation in a society bound by artistic and religious traditions. Whereas, at that time, the American youth were battling to find values other than economic in a culture which prized only monetary profit.

New York City, 1990. The phrase "the art world is dead" is almost a cliché. According to a curator at Barbara Gladstone's gallery, in the past five years artists have either become very successful (rich) or else have disappeared.

Art has turned into money: "the art world is dead". But outside the art world here there is plenty of life: thirteen-year-old boys burning each other to death. This is no longer the society in which money is the only value, this is an urban society without values.

In such a society, anything is possible. A few days ago all the tabloids displayed the same headline "Cardinal O'Connor says rock'n'roll is the work of Satan". Perhaps the Japanese are being drawn here by the lack, by the absence of order.

An example of nonsense or of the absence of order: a recent Mabou Mines production of *King Lear* in which all the sexual genders are reversed. The setting is the American south. For the first time the character of Lear makes total sense to me. I remember my grandmother. Ruth Malezchech's brilliant portrayal of Lear reveals the ruler as hero, not as a weak doddering old man, but as an aging woman so sure of her power (here, wealth is power) that she can entertain all of her most frivolous emotions and play with her relatives like a cat with mice. She is too confident of power, too certain that she is God.

Goneril and Regan make perfect men, floundering in vulnerability they cannot accept and so grow violent, against a background of houses sinking into swamp, natural decay. This violence of American life, especially the sexual and racial violence, mirrors the Elizabethan darkness. The poor fool, a drag queen, is lynched...

It makes no sense to see Lear as a female, Gloucester as a black woman, Elizabethan England as the American deep south. Through an art form, nonsense is transformed into sense.

Another example of nonsense: if the New York art world is dead, the literary world is only dying and screeching as it does so. The new scandal, the departure of André Schiffrin from Pantheon of Random House, is literary.

In terms of quality fiction and non-fiction, Random House has been, and is, the most prestigious publishing house in the United States. The principal authors and editors of Random are intimately connected to the main literary and cultural organs of New York City such as *The New York Review of Books*. The departure of Mr Schiffrin might be, perhaps, the beginning of the demise of an intelligentsia which has ruled the New York literary cultural scene ever since I was a child.

For Pantheon has been Random House's intellectual star. According to Doug Ireland in his article "The Fall of the House of Pantheon" in the *Village Voice* Pantheon has until now been a Schiffrin family concern. The publishing house was founded by Helen and Kurt Wolff and André's father, Jacques Schiffrin, in 1942. When Random House acquired the company in 1961, they asked Schiffrin junior to be its head. When Newhouse Publications bought Random from RCA in 1980, the Newhouse management, according to Ireland, promised to provide "financial stability and editorial integrity".

"The demise of an intelligentsia which has ruled the New York literary cultural scene ever since I was a child

It is not quite clear how management can promise to provide editors with editorial integrity. This, however, is not an important point.

Again according to Ireland, despite Newhouse's promises in 1980, ten years later Si Newhouse has fired André Schiffrin for refusing "to implement (the) draconian cost-cutting measures demanded by Newhouse that will emasculate the international prestigious publishing house Schiffren led for three decades".

Ireland reported that the hiring of Fred Jordan, the former editor-in-chief of Grove Press, as the new head of Pantheon is another sign of Newhouse's demolition of Pantheon. Ireland implied that Jordan has been hired to do as Newhouse management desires and slash Pantheon's list by two-thirds.

A week ago 300 writers, editors, and literary agents, led by Pantheon writers Studs Terkel and Barbara Ehrenreich, demonstrated outside the Random House offices against Random House's corporate censorship.

The Pantheon case is slightly more complex than as presented in Ireland's piece. According to an article in last week's *Nation*, Schiffrin resigned because he was asked to cut his list radically. He was not fired. According to two Random House executives whom I know, Schiffrin had no desire to play hard ball or soft ball with management and Pantheon had been losing quite a bit of money, not just in recent years. Ireland reported the loss of half-a-million dollars per year "for years" and then last year, two million. I heard figures that were double.

It also seems that Ireland has forgotten that Fred Jordan, along with Barney Rosset, fought the major American literary censorship court battles of this century.

But whatever the specifics of this case, it is generally true that in the past few years the majority of large American publishing houses have changed ownership, management, or radically shifted around the smaller inprints within their own companies. Si Newhouse and friends are not the first to value economic stability above literary value.

Why has the Schiffrin case raised writers and other literary folk out of their graves or off their bar stools? Why are the writers taking to the streets now usually owned by the homeless and

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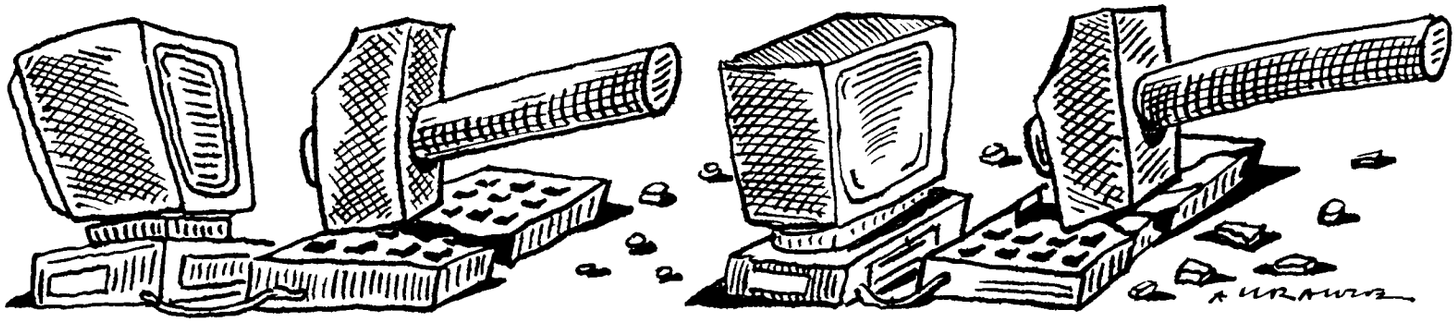


crack dealers? Recently, no literateur has protested against this kind of ownership.

One answer is class. Though publishers such as Si Newhouse for the past few years have been rearranging their own houses in order to publish more blockbusters and bury quality writing, no one has as yet directly attacked an upper-class bastion such as André Schiffrin. And so the upper-literary class is now protecting its own.

John F Baker in his editorial in *Publishers' Weekly* wrote that Random House desired to cut Pantheon's list because Patheon was publishing too many left wing books. The left wing argument is nonsense for two reasons. First, Mr Schiffrin's and Random House's left wing is, generally, the left wing of privilege. Second, in today's economic climate of Japanese-German brotherhood, it does not make sense to argue that a publishing house should sustain the losses that Pantheon has sustained in order to publish, say, the works of Anita Brookner and Fay Weldon, two of Pantheon's most important fiction writers, for the sake of left wing causes.

The Schiffrin scandal is finally a story about literary culture and culture in New York. The more one looks into this affair and into the workings of the literary culture industry, the more one sees that culture is made, economically and otherwise, right wing and left wing, by a very few men and even fewer women. By the owners of culture and therefore of meaning. And if, as in the case of André Schiffrin, an owner's territory is invaded, he will go down fighting.

Life in the hot air factory

Alexander Cockburn on the plight of US intellectuals

Only by the shrivelled standards of corporate culture in this country would Pantheon be considered "left wing". There are non-corporate publishing houses in the US, like Monthly Review Press, South End Press and Verso which are genuinely left wing.

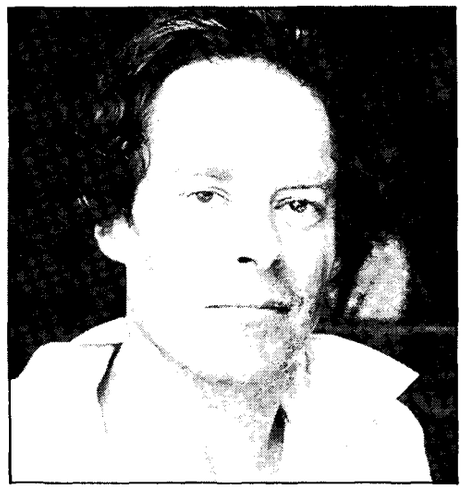
But as the folk running South End will be swift to confirm, the mainstream book reviews like the *New York Times Book Review* or the *New York Review of Books* mostly ignore what they publish, while simultaneously wringing their hands about the encroachment of corporate culture into the famous "marketplace of ideas".

Noam Chomsky's, *The Fateful Triangle*, certainly the most substantial work of history about the US, Israel and the Palestinians published in the postwar period, was put out by South End in 1983. Here was a book by one of the most prominent intellectuals about one of the consuming issues in world politics, the year after Israel's invasion of Lebanon. So how did mainstream corporate culture welcome this exciting new arrival in the marketplace of ideas? Chomsky's book was reviewed in the now-defunct *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* and in *The Boston Globe*. Years later, shamed by lengthy discussion of *The Fateful Triangle* in the *London Review of Books*, the *New York Review* finally gave it an extended notice. That was it.

Pantheon's Schiffrin was forced out by Random House *capo* Alberto Vitale for all the usual corporate reasons. The mainstream intellectual community in New York duly rallied, and many of them joined a picket line in front of Random House on 5 March. The last such rally was the one in support of Salman Rushdie. This is the trouble. Machine gun a Salvadorean, embargo a Nicaraguan or blind a Palestinian child with a rubber bullet and many of them wouldn't get up from their word processors.

The public letter of protest at the Pantheon action reputedly drafted by Todd Gitlin, and signed by many prominent people of letters, has the same sort of self-important rhetoric that marked the Rushdie affair, as though Rushdie were the only writer in our times faced with the threat of censorship-by-death: "When the Newhouse family purchased Random House Inc, in 1980, it incurred an obligation to nurture this invaluable resource [ie, Pantheon] for writers, editors, and readers." It did nothing of the sort. We live in a capitalist system and when Newhouse bought Random House it acquired assets over which it had absolute suzerainty, and if at the time some Newhouse spokesperson said that they intended to "respect and treasure this imperishable resource" only fools would have believed it.

People who live in a corporate culture should at least do it the honour of recognising it for what it is. "Just as we have protested censorship—however rationalised—by dictatorships left and right," the public letter went on, "we protest censorship—however rationalised—by corporate fiat." But corporate culture, by definition, *is* censorship. *Fiat, ergo est.* It's no use



"I certainly would not sign such a ridiculous statement and indeed refused to do so when asked"

behaving as though everything is ok until along comes a fiat you don't particularly care for.

The worst bit of the public letter of protest came with the sentence, "In a year when intellectual freedom has scored such stunning successes around the world, it is appalling that a unique centre of intellectual vitality should be so thoughtlessly extinguished in America." Such stunning successes? In El Salvador? In Guatemala? On the West Bank? In Syria? In Panama? In China?

The statement was drafted within ten days of an election in Nicaragua, a country which had suffered war and a siege by embargo of the largest economic and military power on earth for nearly a decade. I certainly would not sign such a ridiculous statement and indeed refused to do so when asked.

We're living in a hot air factory these days and people will clap their hands at almost any nonsense, particularly if it is flattering to the national ego, as was Havel's speech to the US Congress, which I discussed here a couple of weeks ago. Any US intellectual who talks vaguely about widening zones of freedom without at the same time making some very precise definitions of where freedom is *not* being expanded (viz, in many areas under US domination or influence) is guilty of precisely the intellectual and moral irresponsibility being charged to Newhouse.

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Tacky theatricality: In Donnellans "Peer gynt" Peer's charger is a hobby horse which rides through a grave of plastic-leaved palm trees

Theatre

Wolves in sheep's clothing

Andy Lavender on the radical young directors in suburban garb

Beware the wolf in a lambswool jumper. The worlds of theatre and opera are currently being terrorised by a set of radical young directors who look as cosy and comfortable as the boy next door (Deborah Warner apart, these directors are all male). Roundnecks, sensible shirts and plain colours give them all the dash and panache of off-duty policemen. Only Richard Jones lets the side down. When I met him at the Coliseum he was wearing pointy shoes, white denims and a chunky leather jacket, an outfit more ostensibly in keeping with a welter of productions which are themselves intensely fashionable and irrepressibly modern.

The contradictions are clear. If the wardrobes of these practitioners are suburban, an ostentatious display of imagination marks their productions. In a style-hungry age this has seen them acquiring discreet star status within their own spheres.

Nick Hytner has directed productions for the English National Opera, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre. David Freeman has established the Opera Factory as the flagship of the operatic avant-garde, while his production of *Faust* at the Lyric, Hammersmith, was heralded as one of the major theatrical achievements of 1988. Declan Donnellan trained as an assistant director in opera before exciting the touring theatre circuit with his company Cheek By Jowl's radical deconstructions of the classics. Richard Jones worked for Opera North and Scottish Opera before directing *Too Clever By Half* at the Old Vic in 1988, which, with its madcap raked sets and exuberant performance style, was the single production to confirm the tenor of the new theatre.

"The time was right for a production like *Too Clever By Half*," Jones avers. "There is a cultural stress about how we work visually that wasn't there before. People want that kind of titillation—they want tickling like that."

The titillation Jones offers is not of the tits and bums variety. In his scratch 'n' sniff production of Prokofiev's *The Love For Three Oranges*, seen most recently at London's Coliseum, one sequence featured the sudden appearance of a number of white cowled figures staggering across the stage, tapping the white sticks of the blind, a sudden vision of baffled pain. As the Troll King says to Peer Gynt in Declan Donnellan's current production, proving himself a thoroughly modern monster, "Agree with us on style, and believe what you like."

Peer Gynt, the production, is a more complex creature and Donnellan and designer Nick Ormerod gently lean on the play's message: Peer, in being "true to his self-ish", remains as spiritually developed as an over-enthusiastic estate agent. Even here, though, the currents are dangerous, for the production matches cosmic seriousness with snatches of the most tacky theatricality. Peer's charger, for instance, is a pert, barrel-bodied hobby horse which he rides through a grove of plastic-leaved palm trees with their full complement of coconuts.

Donnellan is not the only director with an eye for the ridiculous. I have fond memories of David Freeman's Opera Factory production of *La Calisto*, revived last year. Mercury dashed around on roller skates, Jupiter puffed a cigar, and a bottle of Coke was rapturously eulogised as the "fountain of life". The Coke bottle, one has to point out, had nothing to do with the rampant spread of multinationalism, as it might have done in the seventies where "radical thea-

Declan Donnellan's production of Ibsen's "Peer Gynt" is at the National Theatre. His productions for Cheek By Jowl of Lessing's "Sarah" and "Hamlet" will be touring later this year.

David Freeman's production of his own adaptation of Malory's "Morte d'Arthur" opens at the Lyric, Hammersmith in September. Future plans include Auber's "Manon Lescaut" at the Renaud-Barrault Theatre in Paris.

Nick Hytner's "Miss Saigon" is at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. His production of Jonson's "Volpone" opens at the Almeida Theatre on 3 April. His production of "King Lear" opens at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford, in July.

Richard Jones' production of "The Theatrical Illusion" opens at the Old Vic on 5 June. His plans for this year include a West End production of Sondheim's "Into The Woods."

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tre" meant the plays of writers like Barker, Brenton, Churchill, Edgar and Griffiths. Although all are still writing, "radicalism" in the performing arts has clearly become a much more slippery concept. One of Freeman's more radical ideas for *La Calisto*, for instance, was to present nature, eternity and destiny as pouting beauty queens, changing into *de rigeur* swimwear at the front of the stage, while his recent production of *Don Giovanni* was criticised for the similarly tenuous grasp of sexual politics flaunted amid its bare breasts and brazen randiness.

Donnellan, meanwhile, sees his own work as political in a Shakespearean sense, ambiguous rather than explicit. Nick Hytner is likewise a fan of the nebulous, suggesting that "the greater the work, the less you can pin it down". Richard Jones readily admits that his own productions might be among those which simply "provoke artistic or aesthetic controversy, rather than political controversy. And that's a bit decadent."

That word at last. Is it decadent of Hytner, in *Miss Saigon*, to have lines of Vietnamese soldiers in white and red tunics and red sashes marching on the spot, as a huge statue of Ho Chi Minh is wheeled on for no apparent reason? Was it decadent of Jones to have an Alsatian trot across the stage at various moments during *A Flea in Her Ear?* It's as well to tread warily, however, for the work of all these directors is not easily reducible to one shared vice or virtue.

In the volatile jangle of Thatcherism and postmodernism where progressive cultural production has been fractured rather than nourished, anything as coherent as a "movement" would have been a luxury. As the nineties bring their own altered priorities which, contrary to fashionable punditry, seem as yet neither caring nor naughty—one can suggest that the new work will incline in one of two directions: towards radical theatricality (fun/frolicsome/dark/dissenting); or towards self-preening aestheticism (glib/chic/passive) which, with more than a trace of *fin de siècle* frivolity, merely dresses to impress.

One final irony is that it is the shadows of liberal men which loom over all the work: Jonathan Miller at the Old Vic, Richard Eyre at the National Theatre and David Pountney at the Coliseum have all been keen to recruit controversial new-blood directors. To this extent the quiet revolution in form has been engineered from the top, a kind of cultural glasnost that is still having to fight against the encrusted hindrances of underfunding and conservativeness.

Certainly none of the directors mentioned has been spawned by a strong grassroots movement—the reason being that there *isn't* one at the moment. On the contrary, any new work of note finds itself in inevitable cahoots with the culture it tilts at, with every programme eulogising the angelic patronage of the show's sponsors. Even so, as the advance of the lambswool jumpers continues apace, one is reminded of that larger form of glasnost elsewhere, which has itself turned sheep into wolves. For when the wheels of progress have been set in motion, there's no knowing what relics they'll eventually overrun.

Television

Girl-talk

Rosalind Brunt on the costs of "making out" with any man

A series based in a clapped-out Mancunian electronics factory doesn't sound a lot of laughs or particularly propitious for prime-time television. But **Making Out** (BBC 1, Tuesdays 9.30 pm) is making out, well set on its second run. All the title's connotations provide the mixture of the new series' success. It's about working-class survival, women going on going on against the odds; sexual manoeuvres that keep life lively, and a daring delight about trying it on. So, as a viewer you constantly think surely "they"—the author, Debbie Horsfield, her characters, the storyline—are never going to get away with that.

Viewers have had a lot to swallow in the first three episodes. That middle-class factory worker Donna, overcome by solvent fumes, gives premature birth in a lift stuck between floors because the electricity bill's not been paid, while Bernie the supervisor sings "Onward Chrisitan Soldiers" and union rep Pauline breathes in deeply. That Rex the boss, three times over the limit with pressures of work and love, wanted by the VAT man and the police, drives his car into a lake. That his wife Stella, preparing for the funeral, invites his mistress, factory worker Carol May, over for a chat which is interrupted by Natalie, who was working on a promotion stand at the National Exhibition Centre when Rex took Carol May there.

Natalie is surprised that nobody knew she had a flat, a car and a baby from Rex and the other two get her convivially drunk while Queenie borrows £500 from Donna's "new man" husband to get her own petty criminal husband, Chunky Buttercup, bailed after an escapade involving a wallet-stealing dog and a basket of live snakes. Then the same police who arrested Chunky turn up on Stella's doorstep to announce that Rex isn't dead but missing as "no body has been found".

Making Out is OTT on inventiveness. But if it only fizzed with surprises, cliff-hangers and intercut story-lines it might well fizzle out. The series avoids sheer freneticism by marking its narrative with reflective pauses often charged with an unspoken erotic poignancy.

There's a lot of girl-talk in *Making Out* that's preoccupied with clothes, make-up and diets, and most of the women are dressed up to the nines in various styles of working-class and "working girl" glamour—tight, powerful and revealing. The effort the characters put into appearance and body-work might make some feminist viewers uneasy about the images of women here. But what I like about *Making Out* is its recognition that the way these women look is as much about declaring their freedom from men—the hard-won degree of economic independence they've achieved to please themselves—as it is about wanting men.

Besides, when you get a man, the series asks, is that what you really want? For against the stylish resilience of the women, the male characters are all inadequate. They range from the wimpishly well-intentioned—Bernie, who can't control the shopfloor women, Simon his black assistant, overshadowed by his tiny but newly-assertive Greek girlfriend, or nice Gordon with his ludicrous childcare theories—to good-for-nothings like former boss, Rex, downright irresponsible in all departments, or Pauline's husband, a grossly loutish, bottom-pinching, paunchy trade unionist. Their intervening presences in the women's lives are usually disruptive and leave the women clearing up the mess.

Representations of working women as always more capable, resourceful and witty than the men they work or live with are still a rather unfamiliar television treat. There are echoes here of the pleasures for women audiences of the BBC comedy hit of the sixties, *The Rag Trade*, with Miriam Karlin and Sheila Hancock outwitting their genially hopeless and patronising boss with guile, determination, and "everybody out" solidarity. And there were the women in Baldwin's jeans factory in *Coronation Street* until they pulled it down last year. Bet, Rita and Deirdre remain as exemplars of women more humorously stylish and strong than any man they've been associated with. But such portrayals are still rare and no fictional working-class woman is shown positively choosing to live alone or with other women.

Working girl glamour: Queenie in revealing garb

Instead *Making Out*, like *Coronation Street*, offers a clear-eyed view of what's on offer in "making out" with any man: the means to some social security, children and brief moments of sexual intensity. But what makes the series so moving is its simultaneous awareness of the costs of these benefits.

As Stella reflects, walking downstairs with Rex's two mistresses: It's odd. I haven't wanted to pull anybody's hair out.

Carol May: You will!

Stella: I don't know. I mean, I keep thinking, was it worth all the aggro? Was he *that* good?

Carol May: Not that good, no. Just good *enough*, given the lack of a decent opposition.

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Film

Eternal childhood

Suzanne Moore on how Australian film is facing up to its past

There is something about Australia that is not very grown-up. I say this not out of some jaded English imperialism but because the way that Australia often chooses to represent itself is as a country of eternal childhood, perhaps even eternal immaturity. This is a genuine immaturity, a gaucheness that is both charming and innocent and one that ultimately wins the day. Both as *Crocodile Dundee* and as himself, Paul Hogan exploits an ignorance of urban etiquette that literally disarms would-be muggers as well as undermining the snobbishness of British tradition.

Against the "done too much, much too young" of worn-out, cynical old America, Australia offers itself up, in its tourist literature at least, as the real thing—a youthful country, uncorrupted by the excesses of the American Dream and unspoilt by the stifling repression of British culture. To some extent this image has been reinforced by many Australian films, even those that have been critical of such of a view. The so-called Australian New Wave was often bathed in a glowing nostalgia. Films such as *Picnic at Hanging Rock* are memorable precisely for their loving reconstruction of an uncertain past.

More recently, however, a new breed of film-makers, the New New Wave, most of them products of the Australian film schools set up in the seventies, have been producing much darker films, ones which refuse the myth of Australian innocence. The brilliant *Ghosts of the Civil Dead* by John Hillcoat and Evan English and Richard Lowenstein's *Dogs in Space* are both extremely uncomfortable films. Now we have a remarkable first feature **Celia** by one of their contemporaries.

Though set in the late 1950s, *Celia* is no cute exercise in nostalgia, despite the fact that on the surface it may sound like yet another rites of passage movie. It is, in fact, a disturbing tale about the end of childhood and the end of both personal and political innocence. Celia, played stunningly by Rebecca Smart, is nine years old, a wilful little girl who lives in a world peopled by fantasy beasts called Hobyahs. Her life changes when her grandmother dies and a new family moves in next door. They become her friends though her family disapproves of their communist views. As they are being harassed for their beliefs, Murgatroyd, Celia's beloved pet rabbit, is also under threat because of the government's nation-wide rabbit cull.

Turner plays wonderfully on the paranoia surrounding communism and the demonisation of the humble bunny as it is turned from pet to pest. Bizarre and horrifying archive footage of rabbits blinded by myxomatosis underlines the fear of being overrun by vermin, or, worse, those of left-wing persuasions. Yet, with great subtlety, Turner also manages to weave in all kinds of other themes. Although Celia's father may find her politics abhorrent, he is attracted to the wife of his new neighbour. She, in turn, is disillusioned by the chauvinism of organised activism though she still manages to encourage Celia's mother to be more independent.

Celia sees all this going on and decides that she will resist. In a shocking climax, which forcefully suggests the shattering of childhood innocence, Turner manages an unsettling moral ambiguity which describes rather than judges the actions of a powerless, but knowing, young girl. This ambiguous tone disrupts any notions of pure guilt and pure innocence, suggesting a far more mature response to Australia's own past than any amount of pretty period drama.

What **Encounter at Raven's Gate** might tell us about present Australia apart from the fact that it is full of UFO's, Verdi-loving policemen and sexually frustrated farm women, is anyone's guess. This sci-fi horror movie directed by Rolf de Heer has been described as the best thing to come out of Australia since Mad Max—and it certainly has a lot going for it except a comprehensible plot.

It more than makes up for this with atmosphere, special effects and ludicrous dialogue. Set in a deserted landscape, it centres on an isolated farmhouse run by Richard, with his wife Rachael and helped by his brother, ex-con and ex-punk Eddie. Strange goings on go on all over the place, not least between Eddie and Rachael. She hangs around the farmhouse in a red satin slip and matching lipstick (well, you would, wouldn't you?) until Eddie succumbs in the shower. Meanwhile Eddie's barmaid girlfriend is being murdered by a lunatic opera buff who also happens to be the local policeman, machinery starts and stops all by itself and their nearest neighbours' bodies have been welded together by an unexplained "presence".

Richard, who is getting weirder himself, seems not to notice what is going on under his very nose, let alone that the outback is being invaded by aliens. In a fit of pique he demands to know, "What the hell has happened to the shower curtain?" This may be complete nonsense but it looks great and is explained, in the end, by a sinister "astro-physicist". "The encounter was total."

The end of innocence: Celia lives in a world peopled by fantasy beasts called Hobyahs

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Tel: 031-556 9969 **Ref: 6943AAA**

Application forms are available from the Personnel Officer, 7 Shrub Place, Edinburgh, Tel: **031-554 3997** (answerphone machine in operation 24 hours per day

Closing date: April 6, 1990.

The Lothian Regional Council is an equal opportunities employer and will prevent discrimination, particularly on the grounds of sex, marital status, disability, race, colour, religious belief, political belief, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, age, trade union activity, responsibility for dependants or employment status.

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NALGO has 500,000 members who undertake a wide range of jobs in all the services of local authorities. At national level NALGO has a team of officers which deal with pay and conditions of service issues and the development and implementation of policy on local government matters. Assisting in developing the union's response to the developments taking place in local government such as compulsory tendering, the local management of schools and community care are an integral part of the work of the team. The effect of the introduction of the single European market on local government is similarly becoming a component of the work. The successful candidate therefore will work on a range of issues affecting the trade union movement and local government in particular.

The suitability of candidates will be considered regardless of race, marital status, gender, sexuality, disablement or age (up to 65). NALGO has a job-sharing scheme which may be applicable to this post.

Application forms and further details are available from the Personnel Section, NALGO, 1 Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9AJ; tel: 01 388 2366 ext 331.

Completed applications must be received no later than 11 April, 1990.

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The successful candidate will possess a good social science degree with a postgraduate qualification, or relevant research or employment experience; and computing/data analysis skills.

The post will be for two years. Salary according to qualifications and experience will be on the scale £10,458–£16,665 per annum. Application forms and further particulars are available from Mr R T Shine, Administrative Assistant, The Registry, University of Kent at Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NZ, quoting reference A90/49. The closing date for applications is 24th April 1990.

Informal enquiries may be made to Andrew Bebbington, telephone (0227) 764000, ext 7525.

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We are looking for someone with an up-to-date extensive working knowledge and experience of the benefits system, who have experience of staff training, debt counselling, money management, advocacy and representational work. The successful applicant will be expected to work on their own initiative as well as working as part of a team.

Closing date: 18th April 1990.

Applications and further details are available from the Director of Social Services, 12 Lombard Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 8RT. Tel: 021-569-5486.

We are an equal opportunity employer. We positively welcome applications from the ethnic minorities, disabled people and women where they are under-represented in particular jobs. Canvassing of members of the authority will disqualify. Trade union membership is encouraged.

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Tel: 01 - 636 1500 ext: 770

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Application forms and job descriptions from: Mrs G. Murton, District Headquarters, Highfield, Cliftonville Road, Northampton NN1 5DN. Tel (0604) 235889.

For informal discussion telephone: Ruth Woodcock, District Drug Services Co-ordinator. Tel: (0604) 235962.

Closing date: Friday, 6th April, 1990.

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DUTCH INTERIORS, new poems by Sarah Lawson, only £1.95, from Mid Northumberland Arts Group, Town Hall, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 8RX.

Exhibitions

THE PAINTED SCREENS OF FRANK BEANLAND Smiths' Gallery One, 56 Earlham Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9PU. Open to the public: Monday 23rd – 29th April 1990. From 10am to 9pm. Private view: Monday 23rd April 6pm to 9pm. Sponsors: Michael Barclay Partnership, London and Adnams Wine Merchants, Southwold. Please contact Juliet Williams on 01-735 9649.

Heartsearch

SERENDIPITY or search, I'll find you! Desirable, academic woman (42, open marriage) dreams of warm, brilliant, well-built lover, Oxford. Please write to Box (09) 101.

GENTLE RECONSTRUCTED MAN, humourous, intelligent, aware, warm-hearted, courageous, trustworthy, unattached, sought by similar woman, 50 years young, who believes you exist somewhere, for joint ventures/mutual enjoyment. London area initially. Box (10) 116.

SMOKEY CLARET AND GUINNESS (low haemoglobin) drinker. Reluctant teacher, aspiring writer, ex evangelist reborn Haight/Ashbury seeks fulsome independent woman for mutual entertainment, caring 50 years. East London. Write to Box (10) 117.

THE MIXED SALAD. A Club where unattached, cultured, and intelligent individuals can mix, share affinities, talk, relax and eat well. Membership will depend on personal interview and members will be placed on a club register. There is no age limit. Invitations will be compiled from this register and these will be extended to an equally mixed group of single men and women, people of compatible interests and tastes. Members are asked to a private Shropshire country house set in large and tranquil gardens. Harmonious and sympathetic surroundings. Exceptional scenery. Good conversation. Log fires. Telephone: 0584 73207.

LONDON WOMAN, YOUNG ACTIVE 49, in helping profession. Enjoys visual arts, creating interiors, learning languages, travel in Africa and Europe, yoga, riding, but tired of independent lifestyle. Would like to meet reflective, sociable man to share love of arts, landscape, beauty and exchanging idaes. Preferably spiritually and politically alive. Box (10) 109.

ASIAN MARRIAGE & FRIENDSHIP Bureau International welcomes non-Asians. All areas/ages. DNSS, 181 Melton Road, Leicester. Tel/Fax 0533-610266.

WIDOWER professional, n/s, retired, leftist, still learning, seeks slimish woman for warmth, travel, growth and more. London/Kent area. Please write to Box (09) 108.

VERY ATTRACTIVE, WARM, and intelligent Hungarian lady seeks youthful, sophisticated reliable gentleman (46-56 years old). Luxury appreciated. Photograph please. Box (11) 131.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, young late 40s, 5ft 5in, seeks soulmate, 50s – early 60s, to share conversation, socialising, the arts and other pleasures. She likes yoga, massage, walking, cycling. London/Herts area. Write to Box (11) 132.

ATTRACTIVE, HAPPY WOMAN, likes art, cinema, books, current affairs, seeks intelligent male. Contemporary, or younger (36-48). Friendship and laughter. Surrey/London. Box (11) 133.

AUTUMN YEARS WOMAN, tall, bright, talented, widowed, needs to share life again with man of style, compassion, warmth and wit. Please write to Box (11) 134.

HIGHLY EDUCATED male academic/writer, attractive and very fit, 43. Engaged in the usual cultural activities and interests. Seeks female partner for lasting relationship. Photo please. South London, NE Surrey area. Box (11) 135.

UNDER THIRTYSOMETHING woman academic, South Yorkshire, likes animals, cinema and short walks, wants to share them with a man. Photo appreciated. Write Box (11) 136.

WILL SHIRLEY VALENTINE please write to professional male Midlander (middle-aged but entirely undecrepit) who needs intelligent, mutually supportive relationship. Guaranteed you won't be bored. Write Box (11) 118.

50's, FIT, DIVORCED usual arty interests: theatre, music etc. Attractive, successful, seeks woman 38-45, London. Phone, photo please and I will reply. Box (11) 119.

UNDERSTANDING LEEDS MALE 45, 5ft 11in, OU Student, Christian, interested in justice and peace, walking, culture, seeks female for caring relationship. Write Box (11) 120.

I HAVE THIS FANTASY of meeting this special man, warm, outgoing, intelligent, caring, with whom I could listen to Mozart with sweet abandon; comb the countryside hand in hand, enjoy the arts; laugh, explore, travel, dance – but then I am a mad Greek woman and a hopeless idealist!! (Late 50s, youthful, slim, attractive, aware, warm, outgoing, and affectionate) Can you make it a reality? Please write to Box (11) 121.

OKAY, UNUSUAL man seeks romance/? with creative, free woman who loves hills, French walking, reading in bed together, inner quest. Write to Box (11) 122.

ARE YOU an otherwise happily married lady, under 50, who would enjoy a "sometimes man" for an exciting, deeply satisfying sexual relationship? Millionaire businessman, 45, tall, dark and "nearly but not quite handsome", romantic, educated, reliable, discreet, workaholic married to his work would love to hear from you. Absolute discretion assured. Daytime get together possible if evenings inconvenient. Photo if possible please. Phone number essential, discreet daytime contact. Write Box (11) 123.

WRITER, 58, Manchester, interests: languages (French and English), food and drink, sport, jazz, countryside, seeks sensual, non-smoking woman companion. Write Box (11) 124.

SOPHISTICATED EUROPEAN LADY 53, who has just arrived in London is looking for a gentleman to show her the city and share various interests. Write Box (11) 125.

WANTED BY MATURE LADY LAWYER, the sort of man who wouldn't dream of answering this, to share a few laughs. Take a chance and write to Box (11) 126.

LONDON TEACHER 56, with own pleasant house in Brittany would enjoy shring it with someone oh his own, who like her, feels need of more companionship and fun. Box (11) 127.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, 38, TALL, slim, lively , ecologically-minded, enjoys foreign films, expeditions near and far, Jungian psychology, other creative, cultural interests, seeks compatible man, 30-42ish, who lives in London. Prefer non/light smoker. Box (11) 128.

GOD'S WORK OF ART (woman, 42) still in the process of construction, seeks gentle man for friendship, possibly marriage. Her real interests include: cups of tea, funny novels, Iona, Venice, wasting time, Lionel Blue, Gerry Hughes, being held. Flattering photo would be appreciated. Box (11) 129.

UNIVERSITY LECTURER, 32, Ph.D, excellent background, seeks a female friend for relationship, marriage. London or NW. Write to Box (11) 130.

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VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Dawn King at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ by Friday preceding publication date. Please note this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 01-739-1645.

WOMEN URGENTLY NEEDED to live and work with long-term homeless people in Glasgow – in small group homes, or as part of our outreach team, contacting and offering friendship to people sleeping rough. Full board and lodging provided, plus weekly personal allowance. Minimum commitment 6 months, preferably a year. To find out more, contact George McKelvie, at Glasgow Simon Community, 133 Hill Street, Garnethill, Glasgow G3 6UB. Tel: 041 946 2053

CHESTER AID to the Homeless are looking for Volunteer Residential workers. Full board, lodgings and pocket money paid. Also paid holidays and travel expenses. Further information please ring Anita Presford on 0244 318360 or write to: Roodee House, 22 Grosvenor St. Chester CH1 2DD.

HARROW HELPING HANDS Volunteer Recruitment Day at Kodak Hall, Wealdstone, on Saturday 24 March 1990 between 10am and 1pm. Volunteers are needed to work within Harrow with people with learning difficulties. 16 organisations and projects come together to give you information. Contact: Harrow Volunteer Bureau on 01-863-5426

THE FAMILY COURTS Service are looking for volunteers to help run two Saturday Access Centres in South London where divorced or separated families can spend time with their children. Please give us a ring on: 01-672 2682.

NCH CARELINE is a free confidential counselling service for people with family and relationship problems. We offer telephone and face to face counselling, the latter by appointment. We are at present receiving volunteers to train as counsellors. Travel expenses are paid. If interested, please contact Maggie Nicholls on Cardiff 390815 or 229461.

RIGHTS & JUSTICE – independent human rights organisation aiding African & Middle Eastern refugees in this country, needs committed volunteers in busy Islington office and at Heathrow. Knowledge of relevant languages especially Turkish, Kurdish, and Arabic would help. Work to include interviewing refugees, and also attending Immigration interviews. Instruction will be provided. Contact is Alasdair Mackenzie on 01 359 4026

PARENTS against Tobacco is an exciting one-year campaign with a lively and varied agenda of activities, and a very busy Euston office. We're looking for volunteers to help out, mainly with office work, in the daytime or evenings. For experience of a campagning organisation, tel Louise or Margaret. Phone: on 01 278 9686

LAY VISITORS in Westminster are local people who make unannounced visits to local police stations and speak to the detainees to make sure that they are properly treated, understand their legal rights and that they are held in adequate conditions. If you are interested and live or work in Westminster contact: Mark Rollinson on 798 3258

BURY ST. EDMUNDS Cyrenians seek a volunteer to work, live and share their lives with homeless people in all aspects of an exciting new project providing, at the moment, accom. in a hostel for 10 residents and a pilot scheme for a Drop-in Day Centre. Valuable experience will be gained. Free board and lodging and generous weekly allowance. Age 18+: min. period 6 months. Please contact: Joan Hobson, 7 Cannonfields, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1JX. Tel: (0284) 705532.

THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It appears three times a week on Thames Television at 6.50pm approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

This week we are looking at Mental Handicap

TUESDAY 27 MARCH—JEAN & NORMAN WILLSON

It was six months after their daughter Victoria was born before Jean and Norman Willson were told that Victoria was incurably physically and mentally handicapped. Their lives ever since have been governed by the need to care for Victoria and to fight for her rights as an individual. It has been a constant struggle with moral dilemmas at every turn but the Willsons will not give up.

WEDNESDAY 28 MARCH—VICTORIA AT SCHOOL

At present Victoria attends a special school but as she is now 19 her schooling comes to an end this summer. At school she received specialised care, therapy and supervision. At the end of this summer term, all that comes to an end and Victoria's prospects appear to involve spending all day every day in her Islington council home, which doesn't have the staff to undertake anything other than basic care.

For further information on both these programmes, write to: MENCAP, 123 Golden Lane, London EC1Y ORT. Telephone: 01-253-9433 and talk to Brian McGuiness.

THURSDAY 29 MARCH—MENCAP SUPPORT

The Willsons are one of many families with children who have physical and mental handicaps. They attend their local MENCAP group for support and advice with other families who are in the same position or even worse. The group meets regularly and is invaluable to all involved.

For more information, ring after the programme on 01-388-8282, or write to: MENCAP, 123 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y ORT. Tel: 01-253-9433

THAMES TELEVISION

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

MENCAP. A new and exciting research project needs YOUR help! Will you share your Leisure interest with someone who finds learning difficult? Accompany them to the activity and give help as needed. Training available and full support given all the time. Two boroughs have been chosen to pilot this scheme. Kensington and Chelsea and Richmond upon Thames, so you will need to live in or near them. Tel Helen Richards on 01 250 4105.

INTERESTED in Befriending a 38 year old disabled woman in N.W.10 area. Tel. 01 459 7178.

THE NAMIBIA SUPPORT Committee is seeking volunteers to help in its busy N. London office. All levels of offered commitment appreciated, reasonable travel expenses paid. Contact: Namibia Support Committee, PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW. Tel: 01 267 1941.

BUILD A Relationship & Watch It Grow. Some children have no-one else who really listens to them. Some have little contact with a positive male figure. Join our volunteer group, men & women, and get to know one of these children. If you are interested, live within reach of Islington, and have 2-3 hours a week to spare, contact Span on 01 250 1223.

CHARTER 88 VIGILS. Make a date with democracy. Are you interested in helping to organise the Charter 88 monthly vigils? All skills and enthusiasm welcome. Ring Josephine King or Paul Farthing on 833 5813 (answering machine after office hours).

CSV – VOLUNTEERING in W. Germany. Social service placements available to EEC nationals aged 18 - 25 with good conversational Geraman. 6 month placements starting in Sept. SAE to Ellen Koretz Whitton, CSV, 237 Pentonville Rd, London N1 9NJ.

FELTHAM CITIZENS Advice Bureau, the London Borough of Hounslow, needs volunteer advice workers. Full training will be given after selection. Challenging and rewarding work. Minimum commitment of two days per week, flexible hours can be arranged. In support of Equal Opportunities and to enable us to be more representative of our local community, the Feltham Bureau positively encourages all applications regardless of race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, age or creed. Phone Chris Morris or Jane Howell on 01 890 2363

KINGSTON Community Transport needs minibus drivers. Hrs to suit, regular or occasional work. If you want to get out, meet people, help your local community + gain minibus driver training experience (expenses paid), call us now on 547 3513.

LEICESTERSHIRE NHS Alert. Volunteers needed to help with organising a series of public meetings. General admin and other social & campaign events. Please contact: Reen Adams, 1 High Leys Drive, Oadby, Leics, LE2 5TL.

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Kathy Acker is a novelist. Her forthcoming book *In Memoriam to Identity* is out in July. **David Barrett** is a former employee of GCHQ; he is now a senior editor at *Computer Weekly*. **Paul Binding**'s last novel was *Kingfisher Weather* and his account of his German childhood and its legacy, *St Martin's Ride* comes out from Secker in the Autumn. **Rosalind Brunt** is director of the Centre for Popular Culture at Sheffield Polytechnic. **Barbara Burford** is a novelist. **Alexander Cockburn** is author of *Corruptions of Empire* and co-author of *The Fate of the Forest*. **Chris Harvie**, Professor of British Studies, Tübingen University is the author of *No more gods and precious few heroes*, among other works. **Agnes Heller** is Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research in New York. Her *Philosophy of Morals* is just published. **R W Johnson** is Fellow of Magdalene College, Oxford. One of **John Lahr**'s twelve books is *Prick Up Your Ears* a biography of Joe Orton. **Colin McCabe** is head of research at the British Film Institute and Professor of English at University of Pittsburgh, USA. **Roy Porter**'s *Mind Forg'd Manacles* is due to be published by Penguin next month. **Robert Shepherd** is writing a biography of Iain Macleod and a study of party leaders for Century Hutchinson. **Colin Ward** is author of *Welcome Thinner City: Urban survival in the 1990s* and *Child in the City* Bedford Square Press.

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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3117 Set by Tom Foolery
Dickensian pen portraits of modern public figures

Report by Tom Foolery
Is Dickens harder to parody than he looks? Or is it that you've grown fat and lazy on easy comps stolen from *Viz* magazine and other organs of popular culture? I fear that this comp sorted out the women from the girls (even though all the winning women are in fact men). What's more, a brief peek at the entries so far in for comp no 3118 shows that your Boswell is indistinguishable from your Dickens. Sharpen up! £8 per winner.

Postscript: in last week's report, the letters "-ing will happen." fell off the final line *en route* to the printers, and "whose" mysteriously became "who's". Anyone who would like a correct version should send a stamped addressed envelope to Grace Elegy.

Mr Paul Daniels was a personality. Every flick of his flexible wrist, every twist of his prestidigitatory fingers, every droll inclination of his oversized head, every somewhat unconvincing hair on same, proclaimed it: you are an anonymous punter, while I am a personality. It is your destiny—and here Mr D professed if needs be a passing acquaintance with the science of astrology to drive the point home—to be humiliated, while it is mine to do the humiliating. I am a personality, he seemed to say, a pulsating star in the firmament of the BBC's Light Entertainment Department: I can do no other.

But what a thoroughly waggish individual was Mr Daniels! What a fund of waggery he had up his neatly cuff-linked sleeves, in the pockets of his stylish waistcoats, in who knows what other crannies of his person! Supplies of waggishness, as inexhaustible as a stream of coloured scarves from a magician's wand! A trowel, nay even an engineer's shovel, would have been too modest an implement with which to lay on this invaluable commodity. With Mr D, and this was a fact on which he had long since prided himself, there was a waggishness by the waggonload.

Peter Norman

Charles, Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, Heir to the British Throne and all that pertains thereto, had an air of extreme earnestness which, conjoined with his prominent ears, the slight flicker of his upper lip and his sober garb, endeared him to the majority of the British Public. He combined protestations of modesty with a readiness to speak his mind on a great majority of subjects.

"I'm no expert," he would say, "but I really think..." Thus he was no expert on architecture, but he really thought that modern architecture had ruined the horizon of our Capital City by erecting blocks of concrete that were ugly and depressing.

He was, he avowed, no expert on administration, but he really thought that something should be done to improve the lives of all the people in the less salubrious parts of our country. He was, of course, no expert on education, but he really thought that our schools should teach children to spell and to write English that was grammatically correct. He was no expert on theology, but he really thought that Cranmer composed better prayers than our present-day

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE

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bowdlerisers.

He thus succeeded in offending architects, politicians, teachers and modern clergymen. He was also the object of sneering insinuations in certain popular newspapers, which implied that he was distinctly odd, that he talked to trees and flowers, and that his relationship with his young and pretty wife was not of the happiest.

John Marriott

"Now what I want is Votes. Get this party Votes. Nothing else will ever be of use to it. This is the principle on which I have always lived. Stick to Votes, brothers."

Mr Kinnock jabbed the air with his finger like a child demanding some inaccessible but enticingly iced cake, destined to remain permanently out of reach. The childish character was accentuated by the hollow whining voice and by an apparently inexhaustible supply of breath as if the four winds had taken refuge in his lungs from a voteless world and poured forth from his mouth about their daily business of whirling their transient message round the globe. The childish message they carried was, indeed, windy, vacuous and signifying not very much. But it came tempestuously, with a confidence almost blowing away the slates of intelligence from the heads of those who came to hear. This was a man at whose door principle had knocked and been turned away. And, in truth, it was thoughtless of principle to look for shelter from someone who had been elevated to his position: conscience had failed and the unconscionable reigned in its stead.

Mark Stobbs

Norman Tebbit, sir: a man developed exclusively on the vertical plane, as though to leave space for others to grow like curiously denuded trees by the same principle of upward mobility. Mr Tebbit does not mince words, fearful perhaps that they might fall out of the grinder too fine and fluid for the Smithfield palates of his constituents. Slicing and amputation are his way, and his mouth, constructed for all the world like a guillotine, the steel of the upper lip falling like a heavy blade on the block of the lower, is so naturally adapted for coarse chopping that one might think his parents were roaring furnaces in an iron foundry. But Mr Tebbit's fire burns deeply, unseen, in the galvanised pipe of his body. At its exit, the temperature would turn steam into a cloudy icicle.

Mr Tebbit's mind, as it palpitates beneath an almost transparent dome, does not, like the German philosopher's, seek remote and intricately shaped abstractions. He could scarcely tell you the time of day by that sort of clock. Rather, he is a ticking metronome of commonsense, and if you do not follow his beat, why, you are no better than a foreigner and he requests your absence. You may go and study treason in a gazette put out by the wicked, horizontal party. That Mr Tebbit tells no lies is universally known. Indeed, his pendulum flies too fast between the solid, indubitable ends of its case to hold any dialogue with beings alien to the kingdom of Hard Fact and Realistic Approaches. Mr Tebbit's heart—ah, but that must wait, reader, like all mysteries, for a further revelation.

Basil Ransome-Davies

Mr Wogan, dear reader, can more frequently be seen deliberately negotiating the broad stairs on the set of the TV studio, where every other weekday he pursues his lucrative occupation as a presenter.

His immaculately coiffured hair, which several detractors suspect is one of several tonsured wigs, frames his frank open features centring on a well-proportioned nose culminating in nostrils which the writer senses would, without much provocation, flare with displeasure. On each side of his distinguished olfactory organ, twinkling grey eyes, restless beneath mobile eyebrows, search the baying audience quizzically for a response after each morsel of self-deprecating repartee is thrown to it.

Of Irish descent, he boasts a stocky figure whose limbs are in pleasing physical relation to his leonine head which prognosticates of intellectual competence if size were to be the deciding factor.

His numerous but modest references to his personal attributes, abilities and achievements belie a rampaging ego craving adulation and fame.

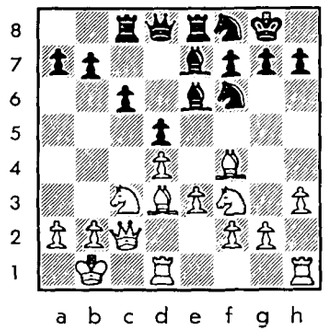
A man whose superficially retiring disposition is aptly complemented by an insidious veneer of bonhomie, charm and altruism.

His conversational forays seem to assume that his audience is perennially fascinated by the trivia of TV and film personalities' tedious experiences.

R J Pickles

No 3120 Set by E O Parrott
Not everyone yearns for spring; Let us have verses in which the advent of spring is deplored. 16 lines maximum, by 5 April.

CHESS



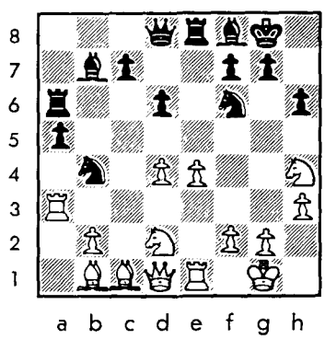
In the sporting calendar, 1990 may turn out to be the year of the underdog. If Buster Douglas can stop Mike Tyson and the England cricket team can win a Test against the West Indies, anything is possible. The Dutch grandmaster Jan Timman is hoping to extend the series of upsets by beating Karpov in the final of the Candidates' series. The winner of this twelve game match, currently in progress in Kuala Lumpur, will challenge Kasparov for the world title later this year.

Timman may be the underdog, but he is not enough of a young dog. Both he and Karpov will soon be celebrating their fortieth year to heaven, and both of them have been amongst the elite of international chess these past twenty years. Some day Karpov must yield his place as Kasparov's real opponent. But when he does it will be to one of the darlings of time in the next generation—Ivanchuk, Salov, Gelfand, Adams, or one of the Polgar sisters.

Timman has on occasion outplayed the ex-world champion. For example, the diagram above is taken from Timman-Karpov, Bugojno 1978, after Black's 12th move. The opening was the Exchange Variation of the Queen's Gambit, which always seems something of an uphill struggle for Black, whether White castles K-side and plays a minority attack with b4-b5, or follows the recipe adopted here by Timman, of castling long and charging up the K-side:
13 Ng5 b5 14 Be5 h6 15 Nxe6 Nxe6 16 g4 Nd7 17 h4 He does not mind parting with the h-pawn. Otherwise Black would play 17... Bh4 with a sort of blockade. **b4 18 Ne2 Bxh4 19 f4 c5 20 Ba6** Winning the Rook, since after 20... Rc6 21 Bb5 and the Black Q, defending both d7 and h4, is overloaded. **Be7 21 Bxc8 Qxc8 22 Ng3 f6 23 Rxh6!** A heavy blow as Black would not survive 23...gxh6 24 Qg6+ for long. **Nef8 24 Rh3 c4 25 Nf5 fxe5 26 fxe5 Qc6 27 Rdh1 Ng6 28 Nd6** Good enough, though Timman later pointed out that 28 Nxg7! Kxg7 29 Rh7+ Kg8 30 Rh8+! Nxh8 31 Qh7+ Kf8 32 Qh8+ Kf7 33 Rh7+ would have been even better. **Ndf8 29 Nxe8 Qxe8 30 Rh5 Qc6 31 Qf5** and with White's major pieces so dominant the rest of the game was not too difficult for the Dutch GM.

Although Karpov lost that game he still went on to win the tournament. The fortunes of the two rivals were reversed in last year's World Cup tourney in Rotterdam, where Timman came through to snatch first place as Karpov faltered in the closing rounds. But Karpov won their individual encounter, confirming his superior strike-rate in their personal series at a steady ratio of four victories for every defeat.

Timman qualified to play Karpov by winning a match against Speelman that even the most sympathetic critic would have to agree was a blunderful affair. Unfortunately for the Dutch GM he continued in the same errant vein in the first game of the present match:
Timman - Karpov, Kuala Lumpur 1990. Ruy Lopez.
1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 Bb7 10 d4 Re8 11 Nbd2 Bf8 12 a4 h6 13 Bc2 exd4 14 cxd4 Nb4 15 Bb1 bxa4 Karpov seems to have decided that 15... c5, as he played in his 1986 match against Kasparov, is too ambitious. **16 Rxa4 a5 17 Ra3 Ra6 18 Nh4?** See the diagram below. As Timman must have analysed such positions in his pre-match preparation, this is a real stinker. **Nxe4! 19 Nxe4 Bxe4** Of course not 19... Qxh4 20 Nf6+. **20 Bxe4 d5!** 20... Qxh4 was still no good because of 21 Bh7+. But now White is in trouble since after 21 Bxd5 Nxd5 both Ra3 and Nh4 are under attack. **21 Rae3 Rae6 22 Bg6!?** An ingenious try based on the idea that 22... Rxe3 23 Bxf7+ Kxf7 24 Qh5+ is quite acceptable for White. However, 22 Bxd5 Qxd5 probably gave better drawing chances, although it is still uncomfortable because of the weakness of d4 and Black's control of d5. **Qxh4 23 Rxe6 Rxe6 24 Rxe6 fxe6 25 Be3 Qf6 26 Qg4 Bd6 27 h4 Nc6 28 Be8 Ne7 29 Bd7 Nf5 30 h5 Kf7 31 Bc8 Ke7 32 b3?** In spite of the two Bishops he had no real compensation for the pawn, but this careless move allows Karpov to finish matters quickly. **c5! 33 Qe2** Abject retreat, but in view of 33 dxc5 Qa1+ and mates, there was nothing to be done. **cxd4 34 Bd2 d3** Rubbing it in: if 35 Qxd3 Qa1+ 36 Qf1 Bh2+. **35 Qd1 Qh4 36 g3 Nxg3 0-1** After 37 fxg3 Qxg3+ 38 Kf1 Bc5 mate follows on either f2 or g1.



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